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The life of privilege

THE LIFE OF PRIVILEGE

Northfield Addresses

.. .. 1895

By REV. ANDREW MURRAY.

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Charles W. Peck

THE LIFE OF PRIVILEGE

Possession, Peace, and Power

BY THE
REV. H. W. WEBB-PEPLOE

PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, LONDON

INTRODUCTION BY
D. L. MOODY

EDITED BY
DELANVAN L. PIERSON

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God."

"If sons, then heirs . . . joint heirs with Jesus Christ."

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INTRODUCTION

THESE addresses by Prebendary Webb-Peploe, given before the Northfield Bible Conference last August, have proved of such help and inspiration to so many Christians that I am persuaded their mission will be greatly increased in this permanent form.

What the church of Christ needs now is, not more creeds or articles of faith, not more factions or reformations, not more eloquence or learning, but more men with courage and wisdom, who, in a spirit of brotherly love, will make practical applications of those principles which the church accepts. "The great mass of our ministers are sound enough in the faith," said Spurgeon, "but not sound enough in the way they preach it." It has been the object of these addresses to arouse ministers and laymen to a sense of their privileges and responsibilities as "co-workers with Christ," and to call them to separation from the hindrances of the world.

As God has wonderfully owned these heart-searching messages by the blessing which they have brought to many of us who heard them, may he still more abundantly bless them in their present form, reaching over a wider area and calling men and women everywhere to a closer life with Christ.

D. L. MOODY.

EAST NORTHFIELD,
February 1, 1896.

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THE LIFE OF PRIVILEGE

MAN'S REASONABLE SERVICE

AS EXHIBITED IN THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”—ROMANS XII. 1, 2.

THESE words were addressed by the Apostle Paul to all those that are “beloved of God, and called to be saints” (Rom. i. 7). They are not, therefore, addressed to the outside world, but to those who have special reasons for being devoted to the Lord’s service; to persons to whom the Apostle felt that he was justified in making this peculiarly solemn and all-pervading appeal. No man can justifiably make an appeal for self-sacrifice to reasonable people without giving good grounds for such an appeal, more especially when it may involve peculiar trials and suffering for those on whom he makes the demand.

The Christians to whom St. Paul was writing were living under the government of Nero, the most absolute embodiment of wickedness that could be found in the position of an auto-

crat; and when St. Paul well knew that those believers in Jesus Christ might have to sacrifice their lives at a moment's notice, undergoing the most exquisite torture, it is no light appeal that he makes to *them* when he says, "I beseech you, brethren, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." The Greek word *παρᾶσθησαι*, to "present," or "offer in sacrifice," is the regular term for the act of the priests when they laid the sacrifice on the altar before God.* If, then, it was only right and reasonable for the Apostle Paul to give full and proper reasons before making such an appeal as this to men who were for the most part slaves, utterly uneducated, utterly unsatisfied with the good things of this world, and living in the days of such a tyrant as Nero, it would be entirely unjustifiable and unreasonable for me to appeal to the Christians of this enlightened age to consecrate themselves wholly to the business of the Lord, and to give up much that is considered pleasant, satisfying, and delightful in this world, unless I could show good reasons for such an appeal from the words of the Apostle himself.

But we *have* good grounds: "I am not ashamed," says St. Paul, "of the gospel of Christ: it is the power of God to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." It is equally the power of God to you who are full of enlightenment, scientific knowledge, and earthly opportunities; it is the power of God unto *salvation*, unto *consecration*, unto present *satisfaction*, and unto future *glorification*. In the midst of a dangerous age, an age that is being drawn aside on one hand by so-called philosophy, on another hand by so-called scientific advancement, and on a third hand by the so-called

* The same word is translated, in chapter vi. 13, 19, "yield." How happy that our translators should have found the two terms wherewith to render the one expression, and thus to make the appeal so strong that we should be compelled by the very love of God to yield, to offer up, and to present ourselves to him!

delights of civilization—but which is, after all, but the emasculation of manhood—in the midst of all these that are called earthly blessings, I am not ashamed to appeal to the Christians of this generation, and to say that I have a right, in the name of God, to claim your bodies and your spirits wholly for the Lord.

Alas! the body seems to be the last thing that men will give. They talk much of giving their spirits; they talk somewhat of giving their souls; and they think that they can satisfy God and man by saying that they present their spirits, which no man can lay hold of, and their souls, which are only observable in their outward acts; but they refuse to give their bodies, for the most part, because this would cost them something palpable; this would involve what even men call “self-sacrifice.” And yet we have a right to demand—though, like the Apostle, “I would rather *beseech* you, being such a one as the servant of Christ” (Philemon 9); yes, I would much rather beseech you than demand—“that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice to God.” The body offered to God will simply mean this: the *machinery* for the action of the soul; and the soul will only be offered to God when the spirit is instinct with the Spirit of God. It is impossible, therefore, for a man who is not born of the Spirit ever to offer his body to God in that way in which alone God will be pleased to accept it. There must be solid ground, then, upon which to stand when we ask, as a visible manifestation of your devotion to God, that your body (meaning all that is material, all that is involved in your earthly existence) be offered up to the living God as “your reasonable service.”

What, then, are the grounds on which such an appeal can be made? St. Paul, as in almost all of his epistles, here commences his appeal for a practical life of holiness and self-sacrifice with the little word *therefore*. It is with him the turning-point from the doctrinal to the practical, repeated again and

again in this Epistle to the Romans. (See ii. 26; iii. 28; v. 1, etc.) In each epistle he has a similar turning-point.* Surely, then, in this eager, vigorous generation, in which men say that they have but little time for anything which is non-essential, we are bound to give good grounds for our demand that they so sacrifice everything temporal and visible to the Lord. If we can do this the responsibility will rest upon them. When the gospel is preached as it ought to be there is always a turning-point from the doctrinal to the experimental. Metaphysical arguments are now rather the fashion; yet practical Christianity is, I fear, but little regarded in this nineteenth century. The purport of all gospel preaching in our day must be to turn the doctrinal into the experimental; to compel men to see that though they may be perfectly clear upon the fundamental truths of the gospel, it is vain to flatter themselves that these will be effective, either for their own souls or for the world, unless they turn those doctrines into practice, cost what it may.

The Apostle appeals here, in the twelfth of Romans, to the doctrines which he has been exhibiting in the first eleven chapters of the epistle. "*By the mercies of God*, I appeal to

* In 2 Corinthians vii. 1, he says, "Having *therefore* these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves," etc. To the Galatians (v. 1) he says, "Stand fast *therefore* in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." To the Ephesians (iv. 1) he writes, "I *therefore*, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." In Philippians, in the opening of the second chapter, "If there be *therefore* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." (See also iv. 1.) And in the Epistle to the Colossians (iii. 1), "If ye then [Greek, *therefore*] be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." Again, in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians (iv. 1), "Furthermore then [Greek, *therefore*] we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more."

you," says St. Paul. But in "the mercies of God" what basis has he established? At the outset of this epistle he says that he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, because he considers it to be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"; and then, notwithstanding the depravity of his day, and especially of the capital in which he was to find his readers, he tells them that in that holy gospel there is given to all who will accept it "the righteousness of God which is revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." In three different epistles St. Paul has brought in that striking expression, "The just shall live by faith." Here it is used in its most elementary sense—that never shall any man live in God's sight except by faith, and never shall any man be justified except by faith.

He proceeds to exhibit *the necessity for a righteousness which is not of the law*, but of God and by faith (i. 17–iii. 20). He describes the Gentile world in all their ghastly sensuality and degradation, such as never, perhaps, could have entered into our enlightened minds, but so bad that a Chinese translator once said to a missionary, when he had brought these words from English into Chinese, "Sir, you must have studied the Chinese nation long before you could have made a picture so accurate as this." The dark places of the earth are full not only of cruelty, but of the grossest depravity that can fall upon man, when the devil is working in his fullest power. St. Paul gives us this picture of Rome as only an inspired pen could give it. Three times in the first chapter he says that "God gave them up" (vs. 24, 26, 28) to all that was evil and destructive. But then he proceeds (in chapter ii.) to say that it is not one nation or another that is to be found in this terrible condition of hopelessness, for that the Jew is as bad as the Roman, or any other heathen nation (though in a different way); and that they are utterly inexcusable, because that "when they knew God," in another way from the nations of the heathen,

"they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful," but gave themselves over to the terrible sin of self-righteousness.

He turns in the third chapter to exhibit the gross depravity of "MAN" universally; and from the first verse down to the nineteenth he exhibits man in detail, quoting from the Old Testament to prove man's absolute and ineradicable wickedness by nature. He takes the mouth, the lips, the eyes, the ears, the throat, the tongue, the body, and the members, and shows that they are *all* hopelessly depraved by nature, until at last he brings in one great verdict from the jury of common sense as well as from revelation—"Guilty before God." If "guilty before God," it is impossible (he proceeds to say in the twentieth verse) for the law to bring man in "just before God"; because the law knows nothing but absolute perfection, and "whosoever," as St. James says, "offends in one point is guilty of all." Therefore there is one law of condemnation against the whole human race, and no Jew or Gentile can excuse himself on the ground that he either lacked opportunity or had done his best. I suppose that few people honestly attempt to argue before their *neighbors* (whether or not they imagine that they can do so before *God*) that "they have done their best, and that God ought therefore to be satisfied."

No such argument as this will avail before God; but there is an argument, says St. Paul (iii. 21 f.), which will suffice for even the most depraved and helpless, viz., that *God has provided a righteousness which is without law* (specially dis severed from law), i.e., "the righteousness of God which is by faith of [in] Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." He elaborates this righteousness to the close of the third chapter, and exhibits the wonderful provisions of God for the world in Christ; so that none need be lost, none need despair, but all may accept an absolute righteousness in the person of Another, if they are willing humbly to place themselves as lost before God, and to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their substitute.

In the fourth chapter he proceeds to show that this acceptance of man in Another is really the foundation of the Old Testament revelation; for even Abraham and David, the two great founders, as it were, of two different revelations, each found that there was no acceptance for man but by the gift of God through his mercy and love; and they were both right glad to take this provision, though they were themselves so holy and virtuous. The Apostle closes the chapter by saying that this righteousness by faith is not imputed unto them alone, but that it shall be imputed unto us also if we believe; because Christ was delivered for our offenses as well as for theirs, and was raised again for our justification.

Having established this universal idea of righteousness by faith, and having shown that there can be no other for man, the Apostle comes to the first great turning-point in his revelation of the goodness of God contrasted with the wickedness of man. From this point there are no less than seven such turning-points in his argument before he comes to the words of my text. Each of these turning-points closes with the words, "through Jesus Christ our Lord," or "in Jesus Christ our Lord"; and every one of them is a crucial point in his revelation of what he entitles "the mercies of God."

What, then, is the *first* of these turning-points? "Therefore," he says (v. 1), "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Is it so? Is this a fact in our own personal experience? The very sound of the words is beautiful: "Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." This is the starting-point of all blessing, the opening out of a vista of "joy unspeakable and full of glory," in which a man ought, surely, to feel that to be appealed to by God to give up his body and all that he has to the service of the Lord is not a constraint of mere moral compulsion, not a demand that drives like a law, but a very joy and delight to the soul of the redeemed one. "Therefore being justified by

faith, we have peace." Look well into these words in the sunlight of God's favor. Then look out humbly into the battle of life and say it, in your wife's face, in your children's faces, in your servants' faces: "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." It is the first deduction, the holy deduction, of a practical man, drawing his arguments first, and conclusions afterward, from his reflections upon the mercies of God.

But this is not sufficient for St. Paul. He proceeds, *second* (v. 2-11), to give a summary of the mercies which justification secures. He says, We have access, we have grace, and we have standing power for life; we have rejoicing or glorying in the presence of God; and "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost," so that we are never ashamed; we have power to live a holy life when we are saved by Christ's death; and he sums up our blessings by saying, "And not only so, but we also joy [we make our boast, we glory, or rejoice (see v. 2, 3)] in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have received the at-one-ment," or atonement.

He now advances to a *third* stage. He has shown briefly what "the mercies of God" are; he now proceeds to elaborate them, and (v. 12-21) depicts the universality of God's provision in Christ; because a man might rise up and say, "Alas! the mercies of God are exclusive; they are for those who can prove themselves beloved of God, and called to be saints (i. 7); but who can show that they are for us?" "Universal as is the need," says St. Paul, "much more universal is the provision;"* much more the grace of God prevails over the terrible fall of man. At last he says, "As sin hath reigned unto death, so grace is to reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Once again the poor troubled soul speaks and says, "Yes,

* Notice the five "much mores" of this chapter.

it is universal in its provision in the intention of God, and I can see now how, in the sacrifice of Christ, there is deliverance from the wrath of God, deliverance from the penalty of sin. But know you, O writer, the power of sin? Know you what it is to be caught and held in the very vise and grip of iniquity that drags men down to the terrible experience of death—not only to the penalty which comes at the close of our mortal life, but to the pain and the agony of death, on account of the power that sin exercises upon the soul?" Here the Apostle says (vi. 1), "What then? If there is a provision universal for man's need, shall this encourage iniquity and lead us to the degraded *condition* of death? God forbid!"

Oh, have we all heard St. Paul's appeal to our souls in its practical power for every-day life? How dare you live in sin, encouraging faults that you call "small infirmities" or "necessities," until you stand before the world a very scandal to the name of Christ? Keep to the doctrine of the blood, and the blood alone, as the provision of God for the needs of man as a sinner; but for God's sake, for your own sake, for the world's sake around you, and especially for your own family, I beseech you remember this: that to make that an encouragement for sin, however small, is to degrade the gospel, to lose the dignity of your manhood in Christ as nothing else *can* really dishonor it, and to ruin your hopes of glory, because it destroys your power in this world.

The Apostle says, "We were buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." And as Christ hath "died unto sin once," and done with it, sin and death have "no more dominion over him;" so should you (here is his *fourth* conclusion) "reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through [Greek, *in*] Jesus Christ our Lord." You have been transferred from your old position into a new one. You are now

risen in Him who is all-victorious ; you are risen with Him who was a perfect man in the power of God ; and now you know no such thing as a parley with sin, because you need know nothing of its power. You have done with sin, judicially, and the translation of yourself into the experimental deliverance is to be by the power of God the Holy Ghost. "Reckon yourselves to be dead [*νεκρούς*—corpses] indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord."

But once more the poor troubled soul rises before the Apostle's eye, and, making reply to this, says, "Yes, but you are addressing slaves [for such most of the Christians in Rome were] ; you are addressing men who know what bondage is ; and while it is blessed to be delivered from the penalty of sin, there stands the old taskmaster before his former slave and says, 'You are mine ; I claim you.' How, then, are we to be delivered from the *bondage* of corruption ; from the power of evil that comes to us and claims us as its slaves ? We hate it, but it holds us."

In answer to this the Apostle says (vi. 12-23), "There is deliverance from the taskmaster quite as much as from punishment." He says in the seventh chapter, "You are no longer, in any sense, bound to the old master, for you are set free through death. Being set free, you become [*δοῦλοι*] slaves to God, not by law, but by love ; not by necessity, but by the compulsion of tender joy. You can serve now, as free men, out of gratitude and devotion. When the old master rises up and claims authority, refer him to the new ; refer him to the One who has taught you your liberty and has made you his own by the costly purchase of his life. Seek to realize in all its blessed force the spiritual power of those blessed words, 'The wages of sin [as the old taskmaster] is death ; but the gift of God is eternal life through [or *in*] Jesus Christ our Lord'" (vi. 23). This is the *fifth* of the Apostle's conclusions.

But once again, though set free from sin in its guilt, penalty,

state, and slavery—all of which involve that terrible word *death*—there rises up before the poor soul's eye the law of God—not the law of man, but the law of God—and that law of God says that you are bound to it as a wife is bound to her husband, and that it holds you with its terrible power to be responsible to it in every detail. How can any man answer to the law as to the husband who claims an absolute self-abnegation? The law brings the consciousness of sin, a sense of failure, and, at last, the hopelessness of despair.

I cannot enter into the beautiful arguments of the seventh chapter. It must suffice to remind you that in that chapter there is no presence of Christ (except in vs. 5 and 25) or of the Holy Ghost or of grace, but that from the fourteenth verse to the end the words *I* and *me* occur no less than thirty-three times. It is all man; man striving to do his duty, man striving to satisfy himself by works, etc. Scholars have delighted to hold metaphysical discussion on this seventh chapter. Let us rather take the practical view. It describes a man, whoever he may be, converted or unconverted, trying to serve God as a wife may serve a hard and unbending husband who is like a bitter master to her, lawfully her master, but never ceasing from his inflictions of pain upon her. There is a sense of failure until there comes that absolute despair which Paul paints in the twenty-fourth verse: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Then once again he shows the beautiful provision of the gospel: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." This is the *sixth* of St. Paul's conclusions. In the fourteenth verse he says, "We know that the law is spiritual;" in the sixteenth verse, "I consent unto the law;" in the twenty-second, "I delight in the law;" but when he comes to the last verse of the chapter he says, "I serve the law now." O blessed advance! He can serve the law now, because he is delivered and delights in his new Lord.

Then in the eighth chapter the Apostle leads us forth into the grand attractions, the holy joy, and the splendid inheritances which attach to us as children of God in and through Christ Jesus our Lord, by the power of the Holy Spirit. How shall he sum up those glorious mercies of God? He begins with "no condemnation" in the first verse and concludes with "no separation" in the last. But let us not be content with mere shibboleths or aphorisms. Let us see that we know what they really mean. The first verse starts only with the believer's joys; but before we come to the thirty-ninth verse we ought to know very much about the blessings of sonship and the joys of the holy life, until at last we can say, "I am persuaded [Are you? Are you indeed persuaded, with the blessed persuasion of God's children?], that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature,* shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." This is the *seventh* and last of the Apostle's conclusions. This is what we all so delight to speak of—the love of God. The love of God to me is the last of the seven great mercies to which the Apostle appeals—"in Christ Jesus our Lord."

One might think, perhaps, that his argument would now be over; but he remembers that there are some who trouble themselves about the doctrine of election, so he rapidly sketches the great truth of the free will of man side by side with the omnipotence of God, and in the ninth chapter tells us what election means, while in the tenth chapter he says that it cannot affect

* Observe that *creation* is the Greek word used by St. Paul, not *creature*. If even God himself should call into existence anything magnificent, beautiful, or eternally attractive, even such a creation should never separate us from the love of God the Father, the love of God the Son, and the love of God the Holy Ghost.

any willing man's salvation, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved;" and at the close of the chapter he shows God himself "stretching out his hands all day long unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Have we ever thought of those "hands stretched out" from heaven to this world, draining themselves of love, if it were possible, toward "disobedient and gainsaying people"? "*All day long* have I stretched out my hands," saith the Lord. Is not this wonderful—wonderful? Men have to run away from the love of God if they are ever without it. They must get somewhere—I know not where; some strange cell of their own invention must be found by men who would escape the love of God; for God's hands are stretched out, and they drip with riches of mercy. Yet drops would not suffice, for, as we sing:

" Mercy-drops round us are falling,
But for the showers we plead; "

and these showers of blessing are really falling upon us all.

Take one more *in* from the eleventh chapter. Before he comes to the practical argument of chapter xii. 1, the Apostle says, "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all;" i.e., Jew and Gentile are both shut up under sin, that God may show his wonderful mercies to ALL. Do you marvel that, though he was inspired, this man should stop in the midst of his argument the moment that he had written those words, "that he might have mercy upon all," to say, "*O the depth of the riches* both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! . . . For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever and ever." Then there comes from the Apostle one grand pæan of praise, which rises right up to the courts of heaven, and consists of the only word that man has need to say, the one word

that we must say, to all God's revelation, if we would enjoy all the blessing that it brings, and that is, "Amen." "To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

"I beseech you THEREFORE [i.e., by all the mercies of God, which have now been unfolded], . . . that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." Oh that I had words at command to develop as they deserve the mercies of my God, and to make all men know, if possible, the "unsearchable riches of Christ"! Think over these mercies, think of man's need, think of man's ruin, think of God's love, think of the Christ, think of the Holy Ghost, think of the joy, the grand deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God (for that is the Greek). Does it touch or does it appeal to—does it weigh with your soul? I care not for your head so much as for your heart now. The heads are enlightened enough, I believe; but have we all heard and obeyed this call of the Apostle to present (offer up) our bodies unto God? Consider closely what is really required.

You are called to *offer up*. Here comes in the exercise of free will. Man can choose. If he says "Amen" to God, he puts himself absolutely at God's command, "spirit, soul, and body," according to God's order, by his holy Apostle St. Paul, and must offer his body a living sacrifice to God, as his reasonable service. We have been made a kingdom of priests unto God in Jesus Christ, and we are called as priests to present our sacrifices on God's altar. I appeal to all to come before God with what God will accept, and to keep back nothing. Remember that he asks for your "spirit, soul, and body"; and as you lay your sacrifice before the altar, say, as we say in our English communion service, "Here, Lord, we offer and present ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee."

But suppose that we offer ourselves to God, and immediately after our act of consecration there arises some temptation or

difficulty which shall provoke us to withdraw the sacrifice. We have presented our bodies, remember, including every member and every faculty. Now can you imagine an Israelite going to the altar and through the priest offering his sacrifice to God, who takes possession of it, and the fire begins to consume the sacrifice; and then that man comes forward, and, on account of his carnal appetite, demands the sacrifice back again? Such blasphemous sacrilege, I suppose, was never committed by an Israelite—no, never. Yet that is what Christians, called to be saints, called of Jesus Christ, the beloved of God, would seem to be doing day after day. At the close of holy services and conventions, too often, when they say that they have presented their body upon the altar, they proceed to draw it back from God for some little home comfort which they are not ready to forego; for some trouble with a neighbor which they will not give up; for some storm of temper unrestrained, or some other vile wickedness which is spoken of as a mere “infirmity of the flesh.”

“Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.” Observe, I pray you, that it is to be a “*living sacrifice*.” Thank God, the dead sacrifices are over. It took death to make a sacrifice under the law; it takes life to make a sacrifice under the gospel. The man who under Judaism could present a dead sacrifice insults God if he comes before the table and says that God will accept a dead sacrifice for sin. We died with Christ, and have done with death; and now we enter into life, and God’s acceptable sacrifices are “*living sacrifices*” alone. How needful it is not to insult God by repeating the old Jewish ceremonial, but to say, “God, take me alive unto God in Jesus Christ; it is all I have, but take me, Lord, as I offer myself a living sacrifice unto thee”! Are you willing?

St. Paul says that it is “*your reasonable service*.” You are very fond of logic; then take the gospel logic, will you? The

gospel logic is, Man is lost in Adam the first; Christ has died as Adam the second; therefore man belongs to Christ. Now "whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." The Virgin Mary preached one sermon—only one—a beautiful sermon, and we love her for it. O woman, will you follow Mary, and give a pattern to men as Mary did; and begin to convey the blessed instruction through your own example, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it"?

This *beseeking* of St. Paul is so wonderful that it seems to draw out the whole heart to this work. St. Paul says that, "being such a one as Paul the aged, he beseeches." May I say that, "being such a one as Peploe the stranger, I beseech you by the mercies of God"? I can but briefly recall what this wondrous word means. It is not compulsion of law, needing supernatural surroundings like those of Mount Sinai, but it is the logic of the cross to which I will now draw you.

My wife's father, who was formerly a great leader of the bar, and afterward a lord justice of appeal in England, once told me that, as he came out of the Queen's Court one day into Westminster Hall, he saw a brother barrister in the hall and went up to speak to him; but, finding him in tears, he said, "Brother, what is it? Is there trouble at home?" "No," he said, "it is trouble within. I am fifty-six years of age, and I always thought that before I died I should have to appeal to God for mercy; but as I sat in court just now there came over me a text which I had never thought of before. I suddenly seemed to hear St. Paul saying, 'As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.'" He said, "What *can* this mean? God beseeching me! I thought I should have to beseech God, and yet I find that he is beseeching *me*. O brother, this is so wonderful that it quite overwhelms me!" That man died about nine weeks after, and that was apparently his starting-point for heaven. I do not know the nature of his bodily

decay; but my father-in-law saw him nearly every day, and before the man died he was resting in Christ, because he heard the "beseechings of God."

Have we not unmistakably heard the beseechings of God? "I beseech you; I beseech you!" Do not measure it up by American arithmetic. Take it by the laws of heavenly calculation, and claim, I entreat you, all that it involves, including the privilege of sacrificing yourselves to God. There are only three sacrifices which a Christian can give under the gospel dispensation. One is here, your person; another is your money or your purse (Phil. iv. 18); the third is the acceptable sacrifice of praise (Heb. xiii. 15, 16). Your *person*, your *purse*, and your *praise* for God. It is a remarkable fact that the Apostle should use the expression *θυσία* in each of these three cases, for *θυσία* is always the proper word in the Greek for a sacrifice involving the death of the victim. Hence, though offering a living sacrifice, you must die. (See 2 Cor. iv. 10.) Is it very painful? Well, thank God, there is something beyond pain. We may have to die, and yet it is not real death; it is giving the life up, but not giving it away. Oh, give, give, give to-day, and let your sacrifice be a *θυσία* before God. Begin by pouring out your heart and saying:

"Thine forever, God of love, here and in eternity."

Thine forever, cost what it may!

There are two remarks by the Apostle on the word *acceptable*. Man's sacrifice is to be acceptable to God (verse 1), and God's will is to be acceptable to man (verse 2). The order of these used to puzzle me much. God says that his service shall be acceptable to us when our sacrifice is acceptable to him. The world says, "We do not find Christianity acceptable; it is all such a miserable round of duty or service." Nay, not so. The whole matter is really summed up in this: the mercies of God are so great that we cannot help giving to

him, and when we give ourselves to him we find his service a full reward.

“ Make thou his service thy delight ;
He will make thy wants his care.”

If you will only give yourself to God in response to his mercies you will find that to serve him is such a joy that you will go right through the world with joy and gladness of heart.

When I was a young man, and about to be married, I gave all that I could to her whom I would take for my wife. Oftentimes the things were not worth her acceptance, and I wondered afterward that she ever cared for what I gave her, the offerings I made were so painfully poor ; but I know that she received them as if she valued and loved them because they were all that I had to give, and what she really desired and valued was my *heart*.

God Almighty will take your poor gift with delight, even though it is not worth anything whatever. Only give him what you have, and you will find that the joy of the Lord comes back to you moment by moment, until at last you can say, “ My soul is satisfied with marrow and fatness,” while God is well pleased for his righteousness’ sake. “ Be not conformed [like a skeleton] to this world : but be ye transformed ” (*μὴ συνσχηματίζεσθε, ἀλλὰ μεταμορφοῦσθε*), till in the realities of God you find your satisfaction, and your gracious Father finds his delight. May God Almighty seal us all to his own glory by enabling every one to say from the heart, “ My Lord, my God, I am thine forever, and thine alone. Amen.”

THE CURSE OF COMPROMISE

“ Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.”—GENESIS XIII. 12.

IF there be any purpose in conventions, it is that the children of God may be brought face to face with realities; that their souls may be instructed by God the Holy Ghost as to the position which they now occupy in the sight of the Lord, the position which it is possible for them to take if they have accepted the fullness of the gospel of Christ, and the action that they should individually take in order to enjoy the best that may be obtained by the believer. We know nothing of “perfection in the flesh”; nothing of a sinless life lived by man so long as he is mortal. We know of no means by which man may live a life of blessing and power on earth, except as he is in Christ Jesus at the right hand of God. On earth man remains corrupted by nature with what is entitled “original sin”; in his best efforts there is evil, if God be extreme to mark what is amiss. Let us realize this at the outset. And yet God intended man to live a blessed life even here upon earth—a life in which holiness prevails, as against all that is evil.

It is said that a blunder is worse than a crime; and the church of God is making an awful blunder when it attempts, as it is attempting too generally, to compromise between the heavenly and the earthly. Men say, “God forbid that I should sin openly, that I should live a depraved life. I must at least

acquiesce in the standard of morality accepted among men ; but that I should be consecrated wholly to the Lord, and that every thought, word, and deed should bear testimony to the power of the indwelling Christ—this is, in the nineteenth century, practically speaking, impossible!”

Before God and man we deny, with all the powers that we have, the justice of such an utterance. It is a commonplace utterance in the church of God ; but we Christians need to be lifted out of the commonplace into “fellowship with God the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ,” by the power of the Holy Ghost ; into a fellowship which shall enable us not only to talk theoretically about the riches which are treasured up in Christ Jesus, but to say that God has opened that great river of the water of life which was once dammed up in heaven by reason of man’s sin, and has now poured it out upon the children of men. Christ has now opened a new and living way by which all men may enter into the holiest, if they will. As he opened the way upward for men to draw nigh to God, so God opened the way downward for the river of life to come to men ; and that river is to-day flowing over all the world. Who-soever will, let him wash, drink, rest, and rejoice. The man that gets the fullness of the power of that river, “out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” God’s gift to man is no mean thing ; it is no mere sentence from the law court that takes its effect in the eyes of the police officer, so that he no longer has the power of arresting the criminal. The gifts of God are so rich and beautiful that the marvel is that even the carnal—that is, men’s natural—eyes *can* be withholden from seeing the splendor of them, that men’s hearts *can* be withholden from the attraction of them, and that men’s lives *can* be lived so low down, when there is so much to be had.

The life which God intends every Christian to live should not be entitled “the higher life.” Theodore Monod once said that, as he passed through a certain street in Brighton, he ob-

served that it was called "The King's Road." He said to the friend with whom he was walking, "This road is very high up, but it is the king's road, and there is no other; every man has a right to walk in it." As long as men talk about a "higher life" they are generally trying to be satisfied with the lower. But why should we be content to live below that which is really the King's highway, on which every Christian should be walking?

God's picture-book in the Old Testament is purposely put before the New Testament, in order that as children men may learn through pictures the wonderful beauty of God's provisions and the painful stupidity and wickedness of man. A child naturally does not understand the science of painting as the grown artist understands it; but even a child understands a picture, when put before it in simple lines. God has, therefore, pictured in the Old Testament his wonderful gospel, sometimes in the barest outlines, but so that every man may understand those glorious provisions of God's love which are afterward detailed in the New Testament by the example of Christ and by the doctrinal teaching of the apostles. At the same time he has also pictured the blind depravity of man, and his strange unwillingness to belong wholly to the Lord.

In the story of Lot we have a contrast between three classes of people such as may be found in every city or village and in very many homes. These three classes of men are illustrated by the wicked men of Sodom, the halting Lot, and the faithful Abraham.

Abraham is, to my mind, one of the most brilliant, if not *the* most brilliant, of the Old Testament examples of what faith will enable a man to be and to do. Even in this page of his history he supplies precious lessons to the Christian. We can but note in passing the men of Sodom as exhibiting the sin and folly of the world, and Abraham as exhibiting the blessed privileges of the faithful.

I trust that you are distinctly delivered, by the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost and by your enjoyment of Christ Jesus, from the position of the men of Sodom. But while, as professing Christians, we imagine that we could never become like the men of Sodom by indulgence in that which is too depraved to be discussed, and while we contrast their deeds with the life that we are living, yet when God would describe the men of Sodom and Gomorrah he gives us a picture utterly different from what we might have expected. While men and women of to-day say that the sin of Sodom was the most outrageous that ever could be committed by human creatures, and flatter themselves that they could not incur the fate of Sodom, God speaks very differently concerning those people.

“As I live, saith the Lord God, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.”—EZEKIEL XVI. 48, 49.

Who, then, can claim that the Christian church is wholly exempt from the sin of Sodom? I fear that if we were to test our hearts and lives almost every one would find that he was guilty, in some degree at least, of the sins which led to the destruction of Sodom. “Pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness”—I doubt whether any part of the church of God can claim to be exempt from these “little peccadilloes.” We should not flatter ourselves that we have clean escaped from the peril of God’s righteous wrath simply because we hate the title of what is known as the great sin of Sodom. Let us take heed that we be not among the men of Sodom and Gomorrah at all—that is, not at all given over to the world, and thus courting God’s destruction. But can we say that our lives have been translated into the life of Abraham, “the father of the faithful”?

Abraham was a man who, at the call of God, stepped out from the old position, which was practically that of Sodom and Gomorrah; for it is almost unquestionable that Abraham was brought up in idolatry (Josh. xxiv. 2). In the obedience of faith he abandoned everything, trusting himself to the Lord, and going into the land in which God told him to dwell. There he found himself in the midst of strangers, in the midst of perilous difficulties and mighty foes.

Twice we read the remarkable statement that "the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land" (Gen. xii. 6; xiii. 7). For years those sentences puzzled me, but I am quite sure that I see their teachings now, viz., that no man could withstand Abraham. Those Canaanites and Perizzites were a hostile force that he could not possibly resist by any human provision; but they never touched Abraham, but called him "lord." So when we say to you, "Come up, and by faith give yourselves wholly to the Lord, and step into the land called Canaan" (not heaven above, but heaven brought to earth, which is the true Canaan), there will be an instinct in your soul replying, "Yes, but the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwell in the land, and they are enough to overwhelm a man like me. If I attempt to compete with the energy of this day on the ground of living wholly by faith in the Lord, I am sure that it will prove an utter impossibility." My brother, the devil is a liar, and the father of lies. He comes to men of business, and to gay women of the world who would like to have a little more pleasure before they are sanctified to Christ, and he says, "It is not possible for you to get out of the difficulties which will face you when you are utterly given up to the Lord." But God is better than the devil; God is greater than the devil. If you believe in the devil you are done for; if you trust in God you are safe. When the Canaanite and the Perizzite meet you, you have no more reason to fear them than you have to fear a fly, which may trouble you by his presence, but cannot

injure you. The man who goes into Canaan and says, "The Canaanite and the Perizzite are there, but I am safe in the hand of the Lord," can walk through the whole length and breadth of the country, and lift up his eyes northward, southward, eastward, and westward, and find, by the promises of God, that every atom of that land that he puts his foot on and claims is his own, for all the practical purposes of use and enjoyment. Instead of injuring Abraham, the Canaanite and the Perizzite always bowed down to him and called him "my lord Abraham." They never dared to touch him throughout the whole of his sojourn in the Land of Promise. He takes what he wants; he grows so abundantly rich that there is not a man like him in the land, because the favor of God is upon that man's soul. He puts his trust in the Lord and says, "Let wealth come, it is of the Lord; let poverty come, it is the Lord's will."

When Lot inquires in regard to the inheritance, Abraham leads him to the top of the mountain and says, "My brother, would you like to take that part? then I will go here; or this part? then I will go there." He leaves it all in the Lord's hands. My brother, when your father's inheritance was divided, did it cause trouble? Then take shame to yourself that you could quarrel with a brother or nephew because you had not all that you wanted of this world's goods. What is the meaning of *Jehovah-jireh* but this: Abraham has learned to trust the Lord, and the Lord never abandons Abraham? From the moment when we learn what it is to trust wholly to the Lord, every day and every moment, we begin not only to possess spiritual blessings in heaven (Eph. i. 3), but to know experimentally even on earth what it is to *enjoy* the possessions which are laid up for us in Christ Jesus.*

* St. Paul says that he has one gospel to preach, and it is "the unsearchable riches of Christ." How much did St. Paul know of him? All that his soul could take by faith. What he could express to his

There is a grand life to be known on earth by the man who trusts the living God. But between these two extremes—the men of the world, who fall away so completely that God has to destroy them by fire, and the Abraham, who represents the true life of faith, in which there is communion and fellowship with God—there stands a third class, the Lot-like Christians, upon whom I shall now dwell. How solemn is the subject! It is a horrible picture, which I shrink from describing. But we must look at Lot as a concrete example of the life that seems to be lived by the majority of the church of God even to-day. How terrible it seems, and what a reflection it brings upon the honor of our Lord, that men should be contented to live such a life! Only remember that as I picture in Lot possibly your own life (your family life and your business life) or your neighbor's life, I am not picturing an ungodly or a worldly man at all. St. Peter declares in his second epistle that Lot was "a righteous man."

Lot was, then, a man who was accepted of God "for his righteousness' and his mercy's sake"; a man who, among all his fellow-Christians, will stand one day as perfectly accepted through the blood of the Lamb as any one. He was "a righteous man" before God, and he "vexed his righteous soul from day to day at the ungodly deeds" of the people of Sodom, among whom he dwelt. He had no sympathy with and no pleasure in the ghastly iniquities that disgraced the city of Sodom; and yet he is found living there, and terrible were the consequences which he incurred.

Lot had made very large sacrifices in the obedience of faith before he was found dwelling in Sodom. He had given himself over to the Lord under the inspiration of faith at the outset as much as Abraham. He had, in obedience to the call of

brethren about the riches provided in Christ was just so much as he had realized in his own soul, and could take hold of and claim as his own, for *enjoyment*.

God, abandoned all, and had journeyed with Abraham until he came into the land of Canaan. There are many in our day who call themselves Christians; who can kneel down and utter a beautiful prayer; who will read God's Word and expound it to the family; who will go to church regularly, and be down in a subscription list for large gifts for good causes; who have many good works to show as proofs of their faith—but who, for their soul's sake, should begin now to consider whether their life is not mixed up with the world, instead of being out and out for the Lord.

Words cannot lead the church beyond her own faith, even if God gives us words of molten fire that shall burn into men's souls. Words cannot lead the church into the life of possession and power so long as men go on living as they do, and talking about the mere demands of duty. Thank God, that word *duty* is not once found in the whole Bible as we use it. When you read in Ecclesiastes, "This is the whole duty of man," the translators had to introduce the word, and the true reading is, "This is the whole of man." There is no stern law of necessity laid upon the church; the law of *liberty* is what we claim. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." What we want to know and to prove is that there is a life for God's people by comparison with which the compromising Christians of to-day are infinitely to be pitied.

Do any mothers say that they do not go out much to parties and balls until their daughters come out, and then, of course, they "*must* take the girls into society"? Do any fathers not patronize theaters for themselves, but when the girls and the young men grow up and want amusement, then they must, of course, take tickets for *respectable* theaters? The dancing-girls' skirts are just long enough there to save the performance from being described as indecent, and the words that are uttered are not so depraved as to be sure to injure their daughters' morals.

People have said to me again and again during my nineteen years' ministry in London, "I would not, of course, go to a polished-floor ball, but I suppose there is no harm in a carpet-dance. I would not for anything go to see some of the impure plays of which I hear, but a good, first-class, moral theater is all right for Christian people, is it not?" I cannot stop to weigh worldly pleasures in the scales, as a physician might measure out poisons, to see just what amount would be deadly, or just what constitutes the difference between morality and immorality. The Lord has called us to a life full of privilege when *all* is consecrated to God; a life of honor and of delight in giving up everything to the Master. Such quibbling distinctions are of the devil, and it is idle to try and differentiate between the propriety of a carpet-dance and the impropriety of a polished-floor ball. We must not degrade our Christianity thus. We must ask ourselves this one thing: "If I am consecrated to God from this day forward, for time and for eternity, and my profession is real, how can I prove it best by every action of my life, by every thought and every word that proceeds from me?" We are not to ask how nearly we may conform to the world in its pleasures and customs, and give the fag-ends to God from a sense of duty and necessity, but how we can delight our souls in him and his service. There are many Christians who seem to live upon earth and now and then pay duty calls in heaven; but the true privilege of the Christian is to live in heaven and pay certain duty calls on earth when God imposes the necessity.

Lot was a man set apart for God, having been justified and sanctified. All went well with him until he found, through the providence of God, as you must have found, that righteousness and holiness pay even in this world, and he grew rich. There are many Christians to whom God allows riches to come. He has to test them in different ways, and when a man begins to be rich after having been poor, then comes the hour of awful

temptation, and of mortal danger in many cases. It is a grand thing to have a good name and a good inheritance from God, even in earthly matters, but it is a great peril to many men's souls.

When the hour of testing arrives, Abraham and Lot stand together on the top of those heights from which the plains of Sodom can be scanned, and then Abraham makes that glorious choice, giving the option to Lot and trusting *himself* wholly to the Lord. But Lot beheld the plain and the cities of the plain, and he saw that they were well watered, like the garden of the Lord. The moment a man's eyes go downward instead of upward, then his real spiritual danger begins. Lot looked down upon the earthly instead of up to the heavenly, and from that moment his soul was in peril. For mark how he chose. There was first a look, then a desire, then a moving toward, then the pitching of the tent at the gate of, and then the entering into and dwelling in the city where no servant of the Lord could prosper. What a strange law of progress, and yet how perfectly natural!

Lot moves into Sodom. He settles down, and becomes at last a person of importance. I am not at all sure that he was not running for mayor or the lord mayoralty of Sodom. I imagine he would have come out at the head of the city life if he had behaved himself satisfactorily at all times to his fellow-citizens, and had not felt constrained to reprove their ungodly deeds.

At last it seems that even the good God had reached the limits of his forbearance. Let us remember that there is a New York and a Chicago and a London which are not unnoticed by the Lord, and the time may be at hand when God will forbear no longer, but will let his judgment descend upon the cities which are utterly wicked in his sight. Two angels arrive in Sodom to bring the vengeance of God upon that city; and they come unto the gates of the city, and stand wait-

ing till Lot passes by and invites them to his house—for he is a hospitable man! Your well-to-do Christian trying to live two lives, the worldly and the heavenly, is generally hospitable. Into the house of Lot they enter, and there they detail the solemn purposes of God. When the door is shut the message is delivered: “The Lord hath sent us to destroy this city; hast thou any in it that can be saved? This coming judgment—wilt thou escape with them all?”

Have you ever noticed that people who flatter themselves that it is not foolish to live a kind of half-and-half life, sanctified so far as belonging to God is concerned, but living in the most perilous surroundings and dangerous habits, always think that they can escape the danger of corruption and can influence others? Lot dwells in the city of Sodom with the expectation that he can affect the people around him for good. A Christian’s friends say to him, “We ought to go into society to affect society; it is our duty, as Christians, to carry our lights into the world, and then we shall influence men for good.” Be assured that worldly men will drag you down to their level; you will never bring them up to your level until you have taught them boldly to know Christ, and to see the depravity of their nature and their ways.

See what happens: the compromiser goes out into the crowd as Lot did that night, when the men gathered around his house to abuse the strangers; and he says, “My brethren, do not so wickedly.” Here, then, is the time for the man’s character to hold sway; here is the opportunity for him to show how much influence he has among the worldly people with whom he is constantly mixing; here is the chance to prove whether his so-called preaching for the Lord has been of any use! How much influence has he with his neighbors? “This one fellow,” the men say, “came into Sodom to sojourn among us, and he must needs be a judge: we will do worse to him than to them.” *That*, forsooth, is the amount of influence

that a man carries with the world when he tries to mingle with them as one of themselves, though professing to bring his Christianity into society, into business, into amusements, into the world. He carries no weight whatever while he presents a mingled condition, a half-and-half life that has no set purpose throughout it. The opinion of the world is that this man is a sham.

But his family—surely his family will be affected by his religion? The time comes when the angel must destroy the city with fire, and he says to Lot, “Hast thou here any besides?” The man says to himself, “I have at least tried to be a faithful husband and father, though for their sakes, and in business, I have had to mix somewhat with the world; yet surely my family will respect and hear me.” *Do they?* He came to his sons-in-law and said, “Get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city;” but “*he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law.*” They said to his face—as relatives say now to those whose religion commands no respect—“You fool! you have lived for this world, and talked of it as continuing forever; and now you come to us and say that the flames of God are about to descend upon this city. We do not believe any such folly as that!”

Men will never believe the warnings of those who have lived a compromising life, in which the world has had chief power. It is this compromising life which is ruining the church of our day. It is from God and not from man that you should hear the word of warning: “Come out from among them, and be ye separate.” Be well assured of this: that the compromising life is an everlasting disgrace to the Christian himself, and if continued will be the ruin of the church of the nineteenth century, as it was in the days of Lot, when he dared to sojourn in Sodom! When a compromising Christian appears before the society in which he has lived, or before his worldly relatives, and says to them, “The Lord is coming in flaming fire to take

vengeance on them that know not God," they put him down as an impudent impostor.

In half despair Lot returns to his own home, and now shuts himself in with his wife and two daughters, and says, "Beloved, we are called to flee, for the Lord is coming to destroy this city. I have laid up wealth; I have worked hard to provide a competency for you; I have gone through much that was perilous; I have risked my soul; I have lived a half-and-half life; but it was all for your sakes; and now friends, family, and wealth must all be abandoned. Arise, let us flee; it is all that we can do."

Let me say solemnly—for I feel it deeply—that it is men's doubtful compromises that are destroying not only the soul's *peace*, but the whole family life. Men talk of the necessity of conforming to the habits of those among whom they live, and say that they *must* accept the laws of society; but it is just this that is ruining the church and the family.

At last the angel hastens them, and compels the little household to escape. Now what is to become of Lot's beautiful home and his accumulated wealth? He has nearly lost his soul in his desire for riches, and to endow his wife and daughters with something when he is gone; but every shred of it has to be left behind, and he must escape for his life. The angels take hold of him and drag him out of the city. Would to God that I might drag you out from Sodom if you are living an undecided life.

When the angels get Lot outside they say, "Escape for your life to the mountains, and tarry not." Then appears the cringing folly of the man who has brought the cause of God so low, and he says, "Oh, not so, my Lord; I cannot escape to the mountains, lest I die." He actually dares to pervert God's message of truth, and to turn it upside down to please himself. The angel says, "Escape for thy life; tarry not in all the plain, lest thou be consumed," and he says, "I cannot

escape to the mountains, lest I be consumed." Then God is a liar, and man can give the truth without reference to God! Is it so? Choose to-day whether you can safely stay in that plain, where you have been leading a compromised life. Lot said, "Behold, that little city, Zoar: may I not at least tarry thus far in the plain life? May I not keep just this one little thing?" But what God demands is whole-hearted separation, straight out, and all in a moment, from the things that have been bringing curse upon yourselves and upon your family.

I knew of a girl who was kept for seven years in bondage, with no rest or peace of soul, though she was an earnest Christian, simply because she had inherited what appeared to be a beautiful jewel. It was a great attraction to her to observe the way in which people looked at this pendant when she wore it. Remember, we do not forbid the wearing of jewelry, if God does not forbid it. We are not commissioned to say that you may not go to your favorite amusements, and that you may not wear pendants upon your neck, unless God shows you that they are not for his glory. You must settle that with your God. Only take care that your decision is made in God's sight. What we plead for is *principle*. For seven years that girl felt that that simple ornament was interfering with her whole-hearted service of God; and yet she would not give it up. It was a mere trifle, but it spoiled her peace. I have seen people in a solemn convocation of Christians turning their rings, and waiting to see the flash of light reflected from them. Surely, in such cases, even a simple ornament is a snare! That girl for seven years went through spiritual bondage because she would not give up one little thing; and she had no rest because there was a controversy between her and her God! Her soul was enslaved just as Lot's was in Sodom. At last she went to a jeweler and said, "I want you to take this and value it for me." He said he would tell her its worth on the morrow. She could not sleep that night from distress.

The next day she came back and said to the jeweler, "Well, what is it worth?" He said, "It looks pretty, but I am sorry to tell you it is all sham. I can give you seven shillings for it." Seven shillings for seven years' bondage! You say, "Poor thing! to be so deceived. She wasn't much of a discerner in stones." Do you suppose it will make much difference, when you lie down to die, whether it was real carbon or sham glass that kept your soul in bondage to the world? Do you suppose it will make much difference to your peace in that hour whether you have been cherishing real diamonds or paste? We must get over these quibbles if we are to have God's blessing on our lives. Seven shillings may be more than you will get, unless you will give over all your doubtful things to God, and let all you have become his property instead of your own.

At last Lot and his wife and daughters have been dragged out of the city; yet even then he (and the Christian who resembles him) says, "Oh, let me keep but one little relic of the world; must I give up all that has been so attractive?" Poor soul! would to God he could help you in your hour of distress. I know it will cost you much, but the Lord's word is imperative: "Leave all for Christ's sake, or you will inevitably be consumed." It is a hard thing to give up all; but it is "for your life." You have gone through so much for the sake of those possessions that it seems impossible that you should have to abandon them all and escape for your life from the plain where your whole security seemed to lie. Hence, like Lot, you pray for some respite. The angel says, "Yes, you may cleave to this little one, if you are determined to have it." If men *will* make compromises, God lets them alone; if a Christian determines to live in Zoar, God will not force him into the hills. God will never force you further than your own will assents to his purposes of love.

But did Lot find it satisfactory to sojourn in Zoar? Will the Christian find that he has peace and joy so long as he tries to

satisfy his soul by saying that his worldly taste is only a little one? I do not say that it is wrong to smoke, or for a Christian to go to the theater—that is for each one to settle with his God; but when Christians draw quibbling distinctions between great and small sins, between one theater and another, one party and another, it is clear that the conscience is not at rest, and there can be no rest till God's voice is fully and heartily obeyed.

Lot finds it impossible to remain in Zoar. He has to escape to the mountains after all, and when he gets there he has nothing but a cave to live in. Meanwhile his wife has "looked back, and been turned to a pillar of salt." What an awful warning to those who have given up the walk of faith in order that the wife and children should be provided for! To think that that wife may be cut off in her sin, just when the very property is gone for which she had bartered her soul! Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt, and he would ever have to look at that pillar and say, "I brought my wife to destruction by my folly and sin; I have ruined the very one for whose sake I gave up all that was blessed and beautiful." Such is too often, I fear, the experience of the compromising Christian.

One step further and the solemn picture is complete. The man goes up into the hills and lives in a cave, simply because he is *driven* to obedience. It is a poor thing to live in a cave after having been so rich; and then—as if no drop of bitterness should be lacking in that man's cup before he finishes his miserable career—his two daughters, the last shred of his earthly possessions or hopes, whom he has carefully trained in the arts of Sodom, whom he has allowed to associate with the men of that city, and who from those men have learned the ways of immorality, now come to be their father's curse in a way that we could hardly have conceived to be possible. They make their aged father drunk; the sin of incest is twice

committed ; and there are born of Lot—remember, I am speaking of “a righteous man”—there are born of Lot, though a Christian man, a people who throughout the whole of the Scriptures occupy the position of the most accursed of every age and of every nation.

I pray God’s forgiveness if I have not presented this solemn picture tenderly, and if there has been any unnecessary wounding of hearts which God would not have wished hurt ; but remember this : that Christian men are becoming compromised on every hand in these dangerous days, and that this is the sure pathway to bitter misery, bitter loneliness, bitter sorrow, and bitter degradation.

We have not spoken of the *end* of the “righteous man,” for I believe that you will find him safe in heaven ; but will you be satisfied with such an entrance as Lot must have had ? Saved, saved, “yet so as by fire.” Why should men live the life of compromise ? What a blessed thing it would be if without further delay every man and woman would say from the very heart :

“ Now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come ! ”

THE DIVINE PURPOSE

“Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, . . . I will redeem you: . . . and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God. . . . And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for a heritage: I am the LORD.”—EXODUS VI. 6-8.

EXTERNALLY the children of Israel were placed in peculiarly dark circumstances, with difficulties so insuperable, from the human point of view, that it seemed absolutely impossible for them to rejoice or to give God glory by any outward experience in their lives. Internally they realized the darkness of their position, and were craving for liberty, and for the enjoyment of all the promises which God had made to their fathers, and which Moses now recalls to their minds and hearts. And yet they felt within their souls that it was not possible that they could have a life of blessing, because circumstances were against them. In the eyes of the children of Israel God was not as strong as the circumstances in which they were placed; and with all the light and liberty and blessings that we profess to enjoy under the gospel, God is not as strong as circumstances to the soul's conviction of nine tenths of his church to-day. People say, “Circumstances are against us; circumstances compel us; circumstances are insuperable, and it is an absolute impossibility that one placed in my circumstances should ever be a devoted, peaceful, joyful, constantly victorious child of God.”

We testify once more that Satan is a liar. "Let God be true, and every man a liar," says the Apostle; and we would add, "Let God be true, and Satan be a liar henceforth in the experience of your own souls, as the church called of God, redeemed with the blood of Christ, and regenerated by the Holy Ghost." Satan ever was a liar, and he lies to the children of God to-day when he tells them that there is nothing beautiful, nothing blessed, nothing of real happiness and peace and power, to be known by a child of God in this world, except the conviction that God has overcome, that we are accepted in the Beloved, and that we may hope to get into glory only after passing through a miserable existence of difficulty and failure in this world. No! "Faith is the substance of things hoped for;" it brings to the soul of the believer the realization of those things which he hopes to enjoy hereafter. No man has true faith in God who does not in some degree take enjoyment from the things laid up for him in heaven, and which God has provided in Jesus Christ. Faith is no faith that simply attempts to satisfy the soul with the idea of future enjoyment; and the man who says that circumstances make it impossible for him to live a life of uninterrupted blessing and peace and fellowship with God—uninterrupted in its victory over Satan and in its deliverance from fret—is a deceived man. He falsifies the word of God, he brings discredit upon the cause of Christ, and cannot be called a true believer. Uninterrupted peace, uninterrupted holiness—notwithstanding the presence of indwelling sin and the pressure of internal temptation, notwithstanding the knowledge of shortcoming every day, every hour, every moment of our life—uninterrupted bliss, is the privilege of the true believer. The life of distress and decrepitude instead of power which the mass of professing Christians live to-day makes the world around us say, "There is no benefit in Christianity. Why should I give up my ease and pleasure in this world, my satisfaction in business, and profess to live

according to what men call a higher, holier standard of life than others, if the Christians show by their looks and by their lives that they are practically only cripples, and cripples of a very painful class—men walking in distress and difficulty, always afraid that they are going to fall; men who are always needing to look around them for some one to deliver them from the circumstances in which they are placed? ”

Let me illustrate. About fifteen years ago I was asked to speak at the great Mildmay Conference in London to those who were in doubt about their souls' salvation. Four weeks later I spoke upon the spiritual life at another convention at the seaside. I arrived in town just in time for the meeting, and after making the address I was asked by the vicar to find my way to the parsonage. After some trouble I found my way to what I was told was the vicar's house, and groped around in the dark feeling for the bell. Suddenly I touched a human hand. I said, “I beg your pardon.” A lady's voice answered, “It is Mr. Webb-Peploe, is it not?” “Yes,” I replied; “but I do not know to whom I am speaking.” She said, “A month ago I heard you speak at Mildmay on ‘the reason of the hope that is in you,’ and by the blessing of God I have been walking in it ever since.”

My text this night had been from 1 Corinthians x. 13: “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” I asked her if she had heard the address. She replied, “Oh yes, and I have come a long way to hear it.” Then I said, “Now you can pass forever, I hope, into that life of victory, that life of peace, that life of perpetual power and prosperity, that life of unbroken fellowship with God, which I have been daring to trace as the inheritance of the believer.” She replied, with a pitiful tone—I could see nothing but the gaslight reflected in

her eyes—"Oh, I would to God it were possible! I would to God it were possible! but it cannot be with me." "Why?" I asked. "Because of my *circumstances*," she replied. "But I thought I spoke about circumstances, and said that God was stronger than circumstances." "Yes," she said, "you did; but mine are such *peculiar* circumstances." I said, "I thought I spoke about *peculiar* circumstances, and said that God was stronger than they." "Yes, you did; but mine are such *very* peculiar circumstances." "I thought I spoke about *very* peculiar circumstances, and said that God was stronger than they." "Yes," she said, "you did; but mine are such *very, very* peculiar circumstances." I replied, "I did not speak of *very, very* peculiar circumstances; but do you mean to say they are stronger than God?" "Well, sir," she answered, "I cannot say about that; but I know that I cannot expect victory and joy." Then I said, "Let us tell God so. Do not look at me—for I can see that you are doing that—but look up to heaven and say these words with me: O God, I thank thee with all my heart and soul that when I was a poor lost sinner the revelation was given to me that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, and not imputing unto them their trespasses, and that I can now claim peace with God through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. I thank thee, Lord, for this with all my heart. And now I wish I could live a holy life; but, Lord, my *VERY, VERY peculiar circumstances* seem to make it impossible for Jesus Christ to give me constant deliverance. I am very sorry, Lord, that Jesus Christ is not strong enough to meet my *very, very* peculiar circumstances; I wish he were, but it seems that he is not; and so, Lord, I am now to look for a life of failure; I expect it, because Christ is not strong enough. O God, I wish Christ were stronger. Amen." I waited and then asked, "Why do you not say it?" "Why," she said, "that is *rank blasphemy*!" I replied, "That is exactly it; and yet you have been saying it in your heart, but you dare

not say it with your lips. It is no worse blasphemy for me to say it out loud than for you to say it within. Say it out loud." She said, "I dare not." I added, "And nobody else would; let us say something else, then." I repeated the first part over again, and then said, "Now, Lord God, I thank thee with all my heart and soul that Jesus Christ is a *very, very peculiar Saviour* to meet the very, very peculiar need of a very, very peculiar sinner in all her very, very peculiar circumstances, and to bring her very, very peculiar soul through all the very, very peculiar difficulties under which she, in her very, very peculiar circumstances, may be called to pass throughout her life. I accept perpetual deliverance from a very, very peculiar Saviour. O God, I thank thee. Amen." She said, "Is that all? is that all? Thank God, I believe it." And instead of coming into the vicarage, she went down the steps into the darkness; but she went into a light that no human being and no devil in hell can touch. And, brethren, that *is* all, that *is* all—a *very, very peculiar Saviour* to meet your *very, very peculiar need*, however much you have to say that you are a *very, very peculiar sinner*.

Now everybody is a very peculiar person; I never met any one who was not; I never met anybody who did not excuse himself for being a failure as a Christian on the ground that he had very peculiar difficulties; but if you will remember that Jesus Christ died for you as if there were not another soul on earth, and that he was the omnipotent Son of God as well as the perfect Man, and that he is now in heaven on the right hand of God, with all power in heaven and on earth, then you will begin to see that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true when it teaches that men can live a life of victory and power and unceasing joy, of which we dare to sing, but do not mean. We sing, "My life flows on in endless song," and then go out and grumble at everybody. A man goes out of a meeting where his eyes have been turned up until they have nearly gone crooked,

and he comes down to his usual level, and you see nothing but a lowering scowl against God and man.

I do not wonder, my brethren, that the church is a scandal in the eyes of men, and that they say, "Look here; I believe that we are put into this world to get the best we can; you give me something better than I can find in this world and I will take it." Beloved, we *have* the best thing both for this world and for the next if we take the Lord Jesus Christ in all his fullness and say Amen to every promise of God which is wrapped up in him.

God would have us step out of that dark and terribly distressful compromising life into light and liberty, if we only will. In these words of God to Moses there is a solemn warning to ministers. The ministers are at fault, because they stand between God and the people in an attitude of non-expectation, and are thus the cause of the people's unbelief. Brothers, the people will never be above the ministry; and when the ministry are thinking about their provision in this world, and about the opinion of their neighbors, there never will be power. We must shake off the thralldom of men's opinion; we must not care if our neighbor So-and-so does take all that run away from us because they will not receive the fullness of the blessing of the gospel. Twenty sanctified people in a church are better and more powerful for good than two thousand nondescript who are living a half-and-half life. Rise now, my brothers, to the privilege you have in God, and to the responsibility of your position as ministers of God to the people.

There came a time in the experience of God's chosen people Israel when they were in bondage to idolatry and to the world, and under the curse of the flesh. God's pity was so great that he said that he must go down and give them salvation. There are, in this connection, three series of sevens which are brought out in a remarkable way by the Holy Ghost.

There are the *seven steps toward deliverance* as described in the second chapter of Exodus (vs. 23-25).

1. "The children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage."

2. "They cried."

3. "Their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage."

4. "God heard their groanings."

5. "God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob." He remembers it now with Christ in the same way.

6. "God looked upon the children of Israel."

7. "God had respect unto them" ("God knew them," is the margin).

God has looked down upon the people of the church to-day, and he has pity for those who groan in bondage. He is come down in pity to bring a blessing to the poor, fallen, helpless bond-slaves of the world, the flesh, and the devil. But how is he to bring salvation to them? He must appear in a burning bush; and the man to whom he appears becomes Moses—one "drawn out" from the people, drawn out from destruction, drawn out from the world, drawn out to be a soul-shepherd for the people whom God has appointed to be blessed. Moses represents the ministry to which you are called if you are God's servant. Have you ever felt like drawing back from the high honor that was given to you, not of preaching a bright sermon, but of ministering to God's people? Many a man likes to preach a brilliant sermon, but that is not doing God's work. The sermon that will carry weight is the sermon that is spoken from a man's own experience.

God knew Israel, and Israel was to know God. Moses was called, but he did not know God yet, and so Moses became an absolute failure at the outset of his ministry. If you have failed it is because you had not faith to take the Word of God

in its entirety and to go and deliver it in its power to those in the bondage of sin. God said to Moses, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people; . . . and I am come down to deliver them. . . . Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh."

But now Moses makes *seven excuses*—the same that men are making who are called to the ministry to-day. He says (Exod. iii. 11–vi. 12):

1. "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh?" Am I anything of a minister?

2. "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?" As long as a man needs to ask who is the Lord who sent him, he never will have any power in the service of God.

3. "Behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." If you cannot prove beyond doubt that the Lord has appeared unto you, you will have no power.

4. "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." A very good thing; then God will get the glory and you will not. When God takes possession of a slow tongue he can make it fast if he wishes to, but you will get no credit from it.

5. Moses now comes out with his irritation and says, "O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send." You may send whom you like, but I do not mean to go unless I am compelled. Of course you do not carry any weight. A grumbling Sunday-school teacher says, "I have to obey my minister because he wants me to be a teacher; but I am busy with other things, and I suppose that if I look at the lesson for fifteen or twenty minutes before Sunday-

school, that will be all that is necessary." No; you must go willingly and faithfully because the Lord sends you.

6. "Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, . . . Why is it that thou hast sent me?" Calling God to account—a nice state of things in the kingdom of heaven!

7. "Moses said before the Lord, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips; and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?" Do you expect to conquer the devil? Are you quite certain that you are going to bring the people to whom you preach out of bondage? A fine sermon; what is the result? A good deal of credit, perhaps, in the secular press, but how much in the kingdom of heaven? How much to the glory of God comes from your lips? Moses never carried any weight either with Pharaoh or with Israel up to this point. It was necessary for him to come back to God and say, "Israel does not believe; Pharaoh does not care for me; I have made no impression upon the kingdom of the devil, or the people with whom I have come in contact." God had used Aaron as a mouthpiece; but then Aaron dropped out and Moses came in, because he began to expect deliverance for the people to whom he was sent.

Now we come to the circumstances under which people are blessed. Naturally, when we look at their circumstances, we would say that there is no reason to expect that they ever can be delivered and enjoy the fullness of life. What is the highest expectation of the church at large, and what is the view that the world gets of our Christianity? As long as the ministry is evangelical, people expect that they may have forgiveness of sin through the blood of Christ. Believers take what they call a position of service to the Lord; but more grumbling children are never to be found on earth, I fear, than God's children. They look forward to the time when they shall go through the agony of death, and think God will then take them to heaven and all will be well. If that is all we can offer I

do not wonder that the outside world cares nothing for our Christianity.

Now I wish to show you what God means his children to have. When God speaks the wonderful words about his promises and purposes he begins by saying to Moses—who has made a failure and acknowledges it—“Now shalt thou see what *I* will do.” That takes the shine out of the ministry, does it not? But it is such a blessing!

The first man I ever knew brought to Christ through my ministry was a village laborer who was dying of consumption. I attended him day after day for weeks, and found him ripening in grace very rapidly. At last, knowing that he was near his end, I thought that I should like to know what words of mine had been the means of bringing him to know the Lord. I thought that I should remember those words, and might use them again with great effect. So one day, with a sneaking pitapat in my heart, I said, “John, I am so glad that you are near home; but you have never told me what it was that brought you to know the Lord [I was a crafty man that day]. Would you like to tell me before I go? It might help me.” What a liar the devil is! “Well, sir,” he said, “I will tell you. Do you remember once when you gave out a hymn the organ would not go, but began to grunt,* and you stopped and said we would sing a hymn without the organ? You gave out ‘Rock of Ages,’ and Lord A’mighty, how you did bellow it, sir! It went bang through me and knocked me all to pieces, and from that day I began to be a Christian.” There is the power of the kingdom of God, when the Lord uses a man who is not eloquent, but is a fool! It took all the shine out of my sermon; and I pray God that it may take the shine out of the

* We had one of those organs in the country that used to be worked by the hand, and it got squeaky sometimes when it was damp, and would not work.

ministry, and make them feel that it is due to God, and not man, when the blessing comes.

God said to Moses, "Now thou shalt see what I will do." He says four times in this one passage (Exod. vi. 2-8), "I am the LORD." This is the first thing that Moses must understand. The people knew God as Elohim (the Creator) and as El Shaddai (God Almighty); but they did not know him as JEHOVAH, I AM, the LORD, the self-determined Eternal One. Now he says, "I am the LORD," and, "They shall know that I am the LORD."

Now, then, see what the LORD, Jehovah, can do. You have thought that you must lead a respectable life because you are the redeemed of the Lord, but, after all, it is hard bondage. A minister says, "I wish I might go into society. My wife says, 'Don't you think you are a little too straight-laced in your ideas? Don't you think, for the sake of the girls, that we ought to have a little more of fashionable society?'" The church in this nineteenth century is coming down to the level of a rotten world, and yet hopes that the door of heaven will be open at last. I never yet knew a woman who went out in worldly society to please her husband and under the plea that she might thereby save him who succeeded in bringing that husband to Christ. But I have known a husband to drag a wife down, and a wife to drag a husband down. The lower always wins when it comes to a compromise between the Christian and the world.

Now God promises seven things—the *seven "I wills" of Jehovah*:

1. "I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." He takes the people from their own bitter experience of sin, from the burdens of the Egyptians. Many to-day are groaning in agony on account of the power of sin. God gives here a picture of salvation, complete, immediate, lasting. The burdens of the Egyptians are *very* heavy. Pictures con-

vince us of this with regard to Israel; facts convince us that with Christians and the world at large the burden of sin is very heavy.

2. "I will rid you out of their bondage." God never meant us to say, "I am delivered from the *pains* and *penalties* of sin," and yet to have us suffer from its *power*. He takes us out from the bitter pains of falling, and from the lowest condition into which we are likely to fall, if we put our trust in him.

3. He says, "I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm." God's redemption is now completed.

4. "I will take you to me for a people."

5. "I will be to you a God." Have you ever gone through the Scriptures and looked at every text in which those words are repeated either in whole or in part, by simile or by comparison? The Bible simply teems with one thought, viz., that God desires to take men to himself to be his people, that he may be their God.* What does he mean by this? St. Paul

* Look at Leviticus xxvi. 12, where God is speaking to the redeemed people of Israel, and says, "I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people." But what are the conditions? Look at the "I wills" of that chapter: "If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; then I will give you rain in due season; I will give peace; I will rid evil beasts out of the land; I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you. I will set my tabernacle among you. I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people." Look at Jeremiah xxxi. 33; after Israel has fallen away and been brought into bondage again, the Lord says, "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." In chapter xxxii. 36-44, after picturing their utter degradation, he says, "Now therefore thus saith the Lord, I will gather them out of all countries, and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: and I will give them one heart. I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them; I will put my fear in their

says (2 Cor. vi. 16) that God has one covenant to make with the sanctified church: that he will be their God, and that they shall be his people. It means that if we are God's people we look up to him and think that there is never a want, never a desire, that God will not satisfy; there is no prospect that God will not fulfil, no opportunity that God will not enable us to use. All is in God's power, and I am simply to trust him, and to feel that God is my God, and to know that perfect fulfilment of God's promises must come according to the measure of my faith.

6. Furthermore, God said, "I will bring you in unto the land," and

7. "I will give it you for a heritage."

We have been redeemed, like the people of Israel, from

hearts. I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul. For thus saith the Lord; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them. I will cause their captivity to return, saith the Lord." It all hangs on this: "They shall be my people, and I will be their God."

In Ezekiel xi. 19, 20, God says, "I will give them one heart, that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God;" and in chapter xiv. 11, "That the house of Israel may go no more astray from me; but that they may be my people, and I may be their God." God is gracious in every way. Turn to chapter xxxiv. 30, where God says, "Thus shall they know that I their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people;" chapter xxxvi. 28, "Ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God;" and chapter xxxvii. 23, 27, "I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. . . . My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Once more look in Hosea, and see how God shows his one purpose. In chapter i. 9, he says, "Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God;" in chapter ii. 23, "I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." The same promises are in Zechariah.

the wrath of God by the blood of the Lamb, and have been led through the Red Sea, where our enemies were practically drowned. Every man who seeks to have contact with the flesh is putting his arm across the Red Sea and is shaking hands with the survivors of the Egyptians—the flesh—across the grave of Christ. Did you ever think when you made a compact with the flesh that you had to go over the buried Son of God in order to get back to your old lusts and appetites? A man gives way to temper and says, “I have a bad temper; I was born so”—a fine excuse for one who has been reborn! It is a new life that must now be lived; but when you put your hand across Christ’s grave, no wonder that Satan’s hand is a little stronger than yours, and that he pulls you over. Were you redeemed to go on living in the wilderness forty years, merely supplied, like beggars, every day with bread and water? God forbid! He never lets his children starve to death; he manages to give them bread and water; but, after all, it is a tasteless supply to most Christians. What is this manna? Insipid stuff that was like wafers made of honey. The children of Israel disliked it on their part, and so do most Christians. They travel for forty years in the howling wilderness, and with clothes very much patched up. There is something better by far than the old bondage of Egypt or the compact with the flesh; there is something better far to be lived than merely lingering on in a howling wilderness, supplied with bread and water to keep one alive, but not coming into the privilege and choice of the home. I used to sing as a boy:

“ Could I but stand where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o’er,
Not Jordan’s stream nor death’s cold flood
Could fright me from the shore.”

Of course Jordan there means death and the shore of Canaan is heaven. But are you going to fight forever when you get to heaven? Yet all the children of Israel’s proper fighting was in

Canaan, on the other side of Jordan. Canaan cannot, then, stand as a type of heaven. When it is perfected, and when the Lord comes down to establish the New Jerusalem on earth, it may be like heaven on earth, but it will not be heaven above. No; Canaan means the life which God offers his children here—a life of perpetual victory like that at Jericho, as long as there is no concealing of the cursed thing in the camp. It is a life of perpetual supply with pomegranates and grapes and the corn of the land; it is a life in which the enemy vanishes or bows down before us with humility. “In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” You have not expected to conquer. You expected temptation and it came, and you fell because you did not look for the victory God was ready to give you.

Brethren, God has given you a sevenfold promise of blessing—to rid you, redeem you, bring you out, then to carry you safely into the land, and to give it to you as an inheritance. When you think it is too good to be true you may hear his voice saying, “I am the LORD.”

A dear old woman lay dying, and an infidel came in to scoff at her, and said, “They tell me that you are not afraid to die, and are very happy.” “Yes, thank God.” “Do you believe in a God?” “Yes, I do.” “Do you believe that God punishes sin?” “Yes, I do.” Then the infidel said, tauntingly, “I should like to know how you are happy, for if there ever was a bad old woman in the parish you are one. If what you say could be believed it would be a great deal too good to be true.” She looked him in the face and said, “It is, sir; it is, sir; it is a great deal too good to be true; but, bless the Lord, it is true for all that.” Beloved, God’s promises and God’s gifts are *a great deal too good to be true; but, bless the Lord, they are true for all that.*

THE SIN OF UNBELIEF

“Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word : but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord.”
—PSALM CVI. 24, 25.

WHEN Moses, in making his excuses before God at the burning bush (Exod. iii. 14), asked God what he was to say if the people inquired the name of the God who had sent him unto them, God told him to reply, “I AM THAT I AM : . . . I AM hath sent me unto you.”

In the I AM of God lies the fullness of the gospel of Christ. Our Lord said in his closing high-priestly prayer that eternal life is to “know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” Until men know the Lord, no wonder that they turn away from him. In the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea and Zechariah, there is found repeatedly the wonderful truth that to know the Lord is all that is required of man, and comprises all the possibilities of the blessed life. Israel sinned for want of knowledge ; they were blessed and empowered in having knowledge. St. Paul likewise tells the Gentiles who accepted the gospel of Christ that they must know God, and that if only they knew him in the truest sense they would come to the fullness of blessing. St. Peter also enjoins those to whom he wrote to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” It is this knowledge that brings power and enables us to enter into the

life of possession, peace, and power. But how is it to be obtained?

We read that even after Israel had been delivered from Egypt, and had been brought safely across the Red Sea, and had been face to face with God at Mount Sinai, they absolutely "despised the pleasant land." God did not charge them to go forward into Canaan until he had manifested himself to them at Mount Sinai. There he met them in majesty, in divine holiness; he revealed unto them the demands of God upon his creatures. They shrank back, and from that moment were practically lost; not lost eternally,* perhaps, but Israel lost their privileges, lost their powers, lost their possessions, simply because, when God revealed himself to them in holiness, they shrank back because of their carnal heart; they did not believe God and would not accept him, and therefore they lost the land and all that it represented. They lost, brethren, exactly what we as Christians should most desire; namely, personal enjoyment and privilege and peace and power in our homes, and the glorious privilege of winning souls for heaven. We will lose it all if we dare to doubt God.

Though we read that the children of Israel *despised* the pleasant land, it is impossible that they did not *desire* the land.†

* The vision of Israel, which is a type of the Christian's spiritual life, never carries us beyond this present world; and while all Israel died in the wilderness, that does not imply that they were lost eternally. Their history represents the vision of the life that now is; there is scarcely a passage in Israel's history that is typical of the life beyond the grave.

A friend once said to me that heaven meant Canaan, and that every man who died outside of Canaan must have been eternally lost. I replied, "Were Moses and Aaron lost eternally?" He said, "I am driven to the sad conclusion that they must have been." He was a learned man of high standing in the Church of England, but that theory drops immediately when you bring Moses and Aaron into perdition, for Moses appeared with our Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration.

† It is "a land of desire" in the original.

But something hindered them from taking possession of it, though they wished to enter. There is something hindering many Christians to-day from entering into the life or land of privilege, power, and possession which God offers to us.

What is the hindrance? "They believed not his word." They were guilty at that moment of what must be termed the very acme of man's iniquity, for unbelief is virtually to say in God's very face, "Thou art a liar." It is a solemn fact that whenever we doubt God's word we either make God a liar, or we make ourselves a liar, or we make the devil a liar. If God be true, then man must be a liar and the devil a liar whenever there seems to be an impossibility of our attaining to what God has offered. If there be an impossibility of such attainment, then God must be a liar. Israel made God a liar, because they said, "The land is desirable; it is that for which we left Egypt, and for which we risked being slaughtered by Pharaoh's host; we fled with joyful anticipation from the face of our enemies." They came to Kadesh-Barnea, and the land lay almost within sight. They might have entered in the space of a few hours; but because there were difficulties and dangers to be encountered, because there were Anakim and cities walled up to heaven to be conquered, they said, "It is impossible for men like us to enter into such a place of privilege; it is too good to be true." Therefore they "murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord." They hearkened to their own cowardly hearts, they hearkened to their neighbors' words and to the false spies who returned with tales of the mighty Perizzites and Hivites and the giants, and they turned back into the wilderness and left the very gate of privilege to which they had come. You turn away and lose forever this life of privilege and power upon earth, even though you do not lose your soul.

It is an awful thing to read concerning Israel that they dared to say that God promised what even he could not fulfil.

It is all the more striking, since we read a few verses before (Ps. cvi. 12), "Then believed they his words; they sang his praise." The contrast is striking: at one moment they say, "We believe God's word, and we will sing his praises;" the next moment they murmur in their tents, and hearken not unto the voice of the Lord. They believed some things and doubted others; they believed what they saw, but disbelieved what they were offered; they believed what they had known to be accomplished, while they doubted the fulfilment of what God offered for the future. Mark the depth of wickedness.

God is revealed to the children of Israel—the child type for the great antitype of the church—under the title I AM. God revealed himself as Jehovah, him with whom there is no past, present, or future. His people are to see in him one everlasting certainty of omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. They are never for one instant to believe that there can be any difference between a fact accomplished in the past, and of which there is perfect certainty, and one promised for the remote future. The same God who brought about the one undertakes to bring about the other. The moment a man doubts the unknown future he has boldly said to his God, "Thou liest," and it is the one sin for which there is no salvation. Murder, incest, any sin except the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, God's witness to truth, can be forgiven. Israel sinned because they did not truly know God as I AM. They never could realize that they were dealing with one to whom past, present, and future are absolutely one; therefore they doubted the word of the Lord, and refused the pleasant land; they deigned to accept what God had accomplished, but they dared to doubt what God had promised.

Let us see what it is that has hindered so many from entering into the life of liberty, the life of joy, the life of peace, the life of power, the life of certainty, the life of calm, restful holiness, and such rich privileges as might make the very forces

of the enemy yearn to be like us. Why do we not show it to them? It is because we doubt our God as to the future. When Israel believed God's word they sang his praises. What did they believe? The psalm tells us that God overthrew the Egyptians in the Red Sea, and that Israel stood on the eastern shore completely delivered from the power of their enemies. They saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore, and then Israel believed the Lord and his servant Moses. That is very kind and very noble, is it not, to believe my God exactly as far as I can see him! I treat a thief like that; I trust him just as far as I can prove his word to be true. When he says, "I have not your watch," if I feel it in my own pocket I say, "Thank you, I believe you." That is faith in God! Of course men do not mean what their actions imply, but they act unbelief nevertheless. God had accomplished some magnificent works for Israel: he had put them safe on the shore and had thrown their enemy in the sea. They sounded his praises and sang:

"Sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously:
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

But the very next words in the psalm are, "They began to lust exceedingly." Why? Because (verse 13) "they waited not for his counsel." The one way to obtain God's blessing is to wait on the Lord. Israel sinned in that they believed God as far as they could see; but they waited not for his counsel, and so they lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert; they limited the Holy One in Israel. From that moment back they went into a life of distress, instead of entering into the land flowing with milk and honey. God gave them bread and water—we give our prisoners that—but they never were satisfied. I doubt if any man could be quite satisfied with mere bread and water, whether material or spiritual. All those died in the wilderness, though not for

damnation, of course. But they perished in this world, with never an hour of rich possession in God's beautiful kingdom such as they might have had. They disbelieved his word, and so did not take the pleasant land which God offered them. They said, "It is too good to be true, too good to be true," and they lost it.

Many men and women have been for years members of evangelical churches, generous supporters, deacons, elders, or possibly ministers. For many years I was a minister and a faithful preacher of the doctrine of justification, but I had no joy for every moment, no rest in the midst of trouble, no calm amid the burdens of this life; I was strained and overstrained until I felt that I was breaking down. I could believe the doctrine of justification because I saw the facts in God's Book; I believed that it was accomplished because it was history; but when God said, "I can keep thee and bless thee every moment," it seemed too good to be true. Thus a minister goes on in his self-energized efforts, seeking calm and rest and strength, and the consequence is perpetual fret, perpetual wear and tear, a life of strain instead of a life of calm, a gradual breaking down where there ought to be a building up, all because men do not believe God's word. Do not suppose that I despised the promised land. I wished for peace, for rest, for joy and calm. Oh for the rest of faith! May God take us into the land of peace and give us the holy power of God.

Israel failed—failed from lack of faith, because they did not know and believe in God as the I AM. Now faith has two distinct fields of action, or is of two kinds, which we may call retrospective faith and prospective faith. Retrospective faith pertains to the past, and requires authentic and reliable evidence; the one thing necessary is to sift and test the testimony offered, and when one is entirely satisfied with regard to the record, doubt as to its truth is banished. Not one of us

doubts that certain men and women, entitled Pilgrim Fathers, came over from England and settled in America, because of the strength of what we call the testimony of the past. We are simply believing records which have been proved to be true.

Faith in regard to the future, or prospective faith, comes in a different way. It comes from belief in certain promises in regard to which one can only ask that the person making the promises shall be credible, shall be capable, and shall be willing. In regard to man it is perfectly lawful to believe the past and to doubt the future. A man who did a great kindness for me a month ago may promise that he will provide for every want I have in the future; but I am at perfect liberty to doubt either his continued willingness or his continued ability to fulfil that promise, even though I do not doubt his good intentions. With regard to God it is entirely different. We have no right to distinguish between past and future, for God is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Does he undertake to keep me without one spot or blemish? Then the same God who did the work in the past must be trusted with regard to the future, and we are bound to step out as confidently on the future as we rest on the past, or else we are making God a liar.

Now notice the results of these two kinds of faith. If I am convinced by the Word of God that Christ has paid the penalty for me and has brought me into a position of acceptance with the Father, that everything is accomplished for my salvation, the instant result is that, without one shadow of doubt or fear, my soul rests in the calm delight of being accepted in the Beloved. I have nothing whatever to do if I am resting in Christ; he has accomplished it all for me. In the same way, as I look out into the unknown future and consider the life to be lived, if I believe the living God as confidently in regard to the future as in regard to the past, I go forward as confidently in one case as in the other.

It has been said by some that there is danger in this teach-

ing of our leaning to passivity and quietism or mysticism ; that people may be led to do nothing but to sit still and say, " The Lord reigns ; let him act." Nay, nay ; if I believe that the future is conditioned by the promises of God, I step out on those promises and act vigorously, but act calmly ; act constantly, but in a sense without effort, because of the provisions of strength which God has made for me in Christ Jesus.

Take an illustration from daily life. Suppose that your wife or child is suddenly discovered to be in a burning house. In an instant every fiber of your being is at work to rescue that loved one from danger. Your soul is in agony for fear that you will not be in time. Suddenly some one comes from the other side of the house and says, " It is all right ; your wife is perfectly safe." You believe it in an instant, throw down the ax which you have been using to gain an entrance, hasten to the other side of the house, and embrace your beloved. You turn to her savior, wring his hand, and say, " Bless the Lord ! My brother, I thank thee." You rest ; it is done. On the other hand, let there be the future. The doctor says that recovery is certain if you can only keep the beloved one quiet in her critical illness. Now every nerve of your being is exercised to act, but it is action to bring about quiet. You simply rely on the word of the doctor, although he is but human. You trust him, and in proportion as you trust you rest. Yet you act with every nerve of your being to prepare the best food, to provide the needed money—always quietly and peacefully. The very promise of the physician compels definite action, while, on the other hand, the tidings of past truths bring the quiet of inaction.

So is it with regard to the soul. The two great spheres of the soul are the past and the future, the future involving the present, being made up of moments like the present. You believe that Christ died for you ; that he has wrought out your salvation and has finished it. But what about the future? Are

you stepping out in calm and perfect confidence? Are you going about your daily work in a holy rest that never is broken? Are you perfectly sure that you have joy in the Lord at every moment of your life? Can you go forward with unbroken rest and peace and power, ready to say, come what may, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name"? Oh, be honest! You cannot get this life for which you are longing if you are too proud of your own position as a pastor or a great millionaire or an employer or father or mother; if you are too proud to make confession you will never get this blessing—never. You must bow down if you would be lifted up; you must take the place of the poor helpless one and see the great I AM, and then you will receive the blessing.

It may be helpful to some to know how the Lord brought this blessing to me and showed me the life of privilege. Twenty-one years ago my wife and I went to the seaside. We were poor and had several children. It was the year of the Oxford convention; and on the day on which it opened I met Sir Arthur Blackwood, and after we had talked awhile he said, "Do you know about the Oxford convention?" I was a country clergyman then, and had not heard of it. He said, "People are coming together there to seek for a blessing, to pray for the life of rest." He looked me in the face and said, "Have you rest?" I replied, "Yes, thank God." He said, "What do you understand by rest?" "I mean that my sins are forgiven, that I am accepted in the Beloved, that God will somehow take care of me in this world, and receive me when I die." He said, "I thought you would say that; but do you know what it is to have perfect rest in the midst of duties and difficulties, to have a joy that never is broken at any moment of your life, to have a calm that is never interrupted, and to have a strength for every duty, with a sense of repose in the living God?" I said, "No; I would to God I had; that is

what I long for most." He said, "So do I. I will tell you what I will do. A friend is to send me every day an account of the convention, and every morning we will go into the woods and read it. God can give us a blessing here as well as at Oxford."

Four days afterward my little child that was with us at the seashore was taken sick and died. I had to carry the little coffin in my arms all the way home, where I buried my little one with my own hands. I returned from the burial and said to myself, "Now you have lost your holiday, have come home in trouble, and you must speak to your people instead of letting your curate speak; you would better tell them about God and his love." I looked to see what lesson was assigned for the Sunday, and found it was the twelfth chapter of Second Corinthians. I read the ninth verse, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and thought, "There is the verse to speak on." I sat down to prepare my notes, but soon found myself murmuring in my tent against God for all he called upon me to bear. I flung down my pen, threw myself on my knees, and said to God, "It is not sufficient, it is not sufficient! Lord, let thy grace be sufficient. O Lord, do!"

The day before I had left home my mother had given me a beautiful illuminated text, and I had asked the servant to hang it on the wall over my table, that I might find it there when I came back. As I opened my eyes I was saying, "O God, let thy grace be sufficient for me," and there on the wall I saw,

"MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR THEE."

The word *is* was in bright green, *my* was in black, and *thee* in black. "My grace *is* sufficient for THEE." I heard a voice that seemed to say to me, "You fool, how *dare* you ask God to make what is! Get up and take, and you will find it true. When God says '*is*' it is for you to believe him, and you will

find it true at every moment." That *is* turned my life; from that moment I could say, "O God, whatever thou dost say in thy Word I believe, and, please God, I will step out upon it." The very farmers began to say, "Mr. Peploe does not seem as fidgety as he used to be." Men of business, your clerks will say, "He is a changed man now." You in the ministry who have two sermons a week to write, does it wear and tear you out? Two sermons a week were killing me then; now fifteen a week can be preached where God wills. I may be wearing out—I care not for that—it is not tearing out.

Brethren, there is a great God, and he is I AM; he is the Lord Jehovah, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Repose in perfect quietude with regard to the past, and say, "Saved by grace, I rest behind the blood of the Lamb." But also look at the future and have faith in God's promises; step out into a life of privilege and possession. Get well into the promises of God; the good fruit lies in the center.

Spurgeon, in speaking to medical students at Exeter Hall, once told of a friend who had a fine orchard of apples. One day he said to a friend who was with him, "Come down into my orchard, will you? The apples are just ripe." The man replied, "No, thank you, not to-day," and walked off home. The next day he asked him again, but the man said, "No, I thank you; I must go home." Several days the friend asked him, but the man refused as before. At last the owner of the orchard thought something must be the matter, for he knew that his friend liked apples. He asked him why he refused. The man said, "I don't know—I—I don't think I will come." "What is the matter? Have you been trying the apples along the edge?" He said, "To tell the truth, I have, and nastier apples I never tasted." "Oh," the other said, "you have been caught by that, have you? I planted that row just to deceive people. They are the worst lot of apples I could get; but come into the center and you will find my apples

the best in the land." Brethren, get into the heart of God's orchard. Spurgeon said: "Now look here, you fellows, we must have some action on your part. When we were boys we used to go down to the bathing-place, and some of us were rather afraid to go in. We put our toes in and said, 'It is awful cold;' and suddenly a fellow would rush by us, plunge in, and come up to the surface and say, 'It is grand; come in.' Men, go and take a header."

My brother, are you sitting with your banker's books before your eyes, or with your reputation before you, and saying, "I cannot"? Nobody ever thought *you* could, but *the Lord can*. Will you say to-day, from the depths of your heart, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him"? God grant you grace to do it, and a life of power will begin.

THE ONLY TRUE FAITH

“The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. . . . When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”—MATTHEW VIII. 8-10.

GREAT truths have often been expressed in very simple language, and have proceeded from most untutored minds when instructed by God. Very probably the speakers have had at the time but little consciousness of the marvelous truths to which they were giving expression; but this demonstrates the more clearly that God can take the weak things of this world to confound the mighty, the things that are not to bring to naught the things that are. So the Lord is pleased at times to speak by the Holy Ghost through men who themselves have no conception of the depth of their utterances, which are afterward elucidated by the Holy Ghost for the benefit of God's people.

When the centurion spoke these words to the Lord Jesus it would seem that there was nothing more present to his mind than the thought that as a Roman soldier he had learned the great law of obedience—to obey and to be obeyed—and that in his sphere the power to command was absolute just so far as it could be enforced by man. He recognized in Christ the presence of One infinitely superior to any one with whom he

had ever dealt, One who apparently had command in the sphere of the unseen and the spiritual. He thought that what he himself understood as the great law of his life should be applied in the case of Jesus. He argues from the less to the greater, from the seen to the unseen, from the temporal to the spiritual, and says to himself, "As I have been accustomed to obey and to be obeyed in the army to which I belong, so this great Commander, whoever he is, certainly has power to enforce his commands in the spheres of sickness, sorrow, and suffering, over which he holds sway." Consequently he says, "Speak the word only, Lord; speak the word only." Every Christian must expect this same absolute obedience to the word of the Lord which that soldier expected when he bowed as a poor humble suppliant at the feet of Jesus of Nazareth, who he knew had power to enforce his commands. He therefore believed that the Lord Jesus would speak that word which would set his home at rest, and would leave him and all his family at liberty to enjoy the blessings which the Lord provided.*

Life is not only a matter of great difficulty to many, but, owing to our peculiar circumstances,† life is an abstruse question, a riddle of a very peculiar kind. Men see that if the Bible is a divine revelation it offers a standard of living which is infinitely above that which is ordinarily lived by men. They see, on

* Whom this centurion took the Lord Jesus to be, it matters not for our present purpose, though scholars have often exercised their talents in trying to discover whether he took Jesus to be the Lord, the revealed Messiah, the accepted Son of God, or some other personage.

† Circumstances are things that "stand around" us; but if I am in Christ Jesus I am in a position in which circumstances must be outside of him also, and therefore cannot touch me just so long as I continue in the Son of God for security and rest. And if the blessed Lord dwell in me while I am permitted to abide in him, what can circumstances do to injure me? Therefore I need never say again that circumstances are too strong for me, since they are not likely to be too strong for my Lord.

the other hand, that, with the strained activity of the present generation, a man must be very earnestly devoted to his own business if he would keep pace with the requirements of the age. The consequence is that they think that there is a divergence between the spiritual and the temporal, between the doctrinal and the practical, and that it is impossible to reconcile the two. Thus we hear it said that a man or a woman engaged in the struggles of this life cannot be expected to have perfect and uninterrupted rest and joy and communion with God in the midst of the turmoil and distress of business life.

Such a statement, my brethren, distinctly contradicts all the purposes of God; for while life is a riddle to the creature, it is a riddle only because men have either never been taught, or fail to recognize and acknowledge, the wonderful unity which pervades the true life. There may be manifold manifestations of life, but throughout all these manifestations there should run one great unifying principle, one purpose; and unless that unifying principle pervades our every act, it is no wonder that we lack communion and fellowship with God, no wonder that religion is divorced from business, no wonder that what men call the privileges of the gospel are in their minds disassociated from the duties and the demands of a daily existence. We affirm—and I trust that God may confirm it by the power of the Holy Ghost—that the divine unity which pervades the Godhead, coupled with the trinity of manifestation, is intended to be a pattern to us of what should pervade the life of every human being on earth. As life is one, and yet may have manifold representations, so there should be in each of us a oneness of life and of thought, a oneness of purpose and of power, if the original revelation of God in man is to be carried out. Adam had this unity of life, for he was one with God; but Adam lost it because he turned from God. Adam's representative, Christ Jesus, came to bring to us that which Adam

the first had lost; the second Adam regains for man exactly what was lost through sin. Before discord was introduced into their life by sin, Adam and Eve lived for God; they ate for God, they drank for God, they walked for God, they worked for God, they were gardeners for God; their life was one in which God was the all-pervading principle, the all-pervading power; there was for them no severance between the secular and the religious, no difference between the temporal and the spiritual, between the earthly and the heavenly; all was of God, all was for God. But the moment that sin entered into man's being it corrupted and terribly transformed and severed one part of man from his God so completely that all his other faculties became tainted and marred by the disunion. Henceforth man lived a divided life, so utterly divided that it seemed impossible that there could be such perfect reconciliation as ever again to induce absolute unity of power in the sons of men. As long as men and women think that secular life must be a separate existence from the spiritual, that earthly engagements cannot be reconciled with uninterrupted communion with God, just so long are they living outside the purposes of God, contradicting the majesty of their true human nature, and denying the efficacy of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Son of God has been revealed to the sons of men not only to exhibit a perfect pattern of One who lived in perfect communion with God the Father, so that he could say that his words, his thoughts, and his works were not his own, but the Father's which sent him; but Christ also came to produce in the sons of men who accept him as their Saviour the very same existence in connection with the divine, only modified by our human capacity and by the root of sin, which never existed in our Lord, but will hinder and hamper us to the last moment of our mortal existence.

We may find one solution of the riddle of life which puzzles

men strikingly brought out in the centurion's words, even though he may not have understood their full import at the time when he gave expression to them, and though from the natural he argued as to the spiritual sphere.*

In Christ things which to the unenlightened eye seem to be severed are united. All the perplexity and painful distress, the dark difficulties that may dominate one's whole existence, would disappear if we would only learn that in Christ Jesus our eating and drinking, our sleeping and clothing of the body, are as much spiritual matters as falling upon our knees in prayer, or reading God's holy Word, or partaking of the holy communion at the table of the Lord. In Christ Jesus life is one, and there ought to be no division between things secular and things spiritual, things bodily and things heavenly; they must be one, absolutely one.

This truth is illustrated in the twofold life of this centurion. Not until we have carefully studied the military history of Rome shall we fully understand the mighty force of the words to which this man gives utterance: "I am a man under authority." This one idea pervaded his entire existence; this one law—the law of obedience—governed his whole life; for the instant a man was called to join the Roman army he gave himself over to one law of life; henceforth he must not know the possession of property or the possession of relatives, he must not know the possession of a will, or even the possession of hope, in one sense; he was simply a vessel, an instrument,

* Some may think that it is not permissible to infer a great spiritual principle from words which were spoken concerning things temporal, or to impose a doctrinal significance upon words spoken concerning the physical sphere. On the other hand, however, it is right to argue thus, for from the lower life this man drew his deductions as to the higher, from the temporal he rose to the eternal, from the natural he drew inferences as to the unknown but spirit domain. If you sever the natural from the spiritual, you contradict the purposes of life, you refuse to acknowledge the real meaning of life, and you lose where you ought to gain.

taken possession of by the state, to be absolutely, ceaselessly, under the control of that great power which had called him into its service. The Roman imperium overshadowed the man and absorbed him and all that he had into itself. But while the imperium took him into its power, at the same time it transmitted its power to him ; he, therefore, became not only an instrument of the state, but he also became possessed of the whole power of that state to carry out its will, so far as that will could be carried out in one individual. The Roman soldier was the representative of a domination that overruled him, and that overruled the world, and that through him carried out its purpose and pleasure. It was possible for that soldier to embody the whole Roman authority, the whole Roman force, in his person ; he might say, " In all these things I am more than conqueror through the power that has taken possession of me and deigns to make me its medium of revelation." Therefore in the centurion, as in every other Roman soldier, there was a double life. There was, first, a life in which the principle of the domination of the state took possession of him, so as to make him feel that he had not an instinct, not a plan or a purpose, that was not the property of the state. But, second, he could also feel that, as he was taken possession of by the state for its use, so the state, with all its imperium behind him, enabled him to step out with the assurance that it would deliver him from evil, that it would avenge his cause at every point and take his part in the presence of his foes, and that it would empower him for whatsoever it desired. Therefore, so far as Rome was omnipotent, and so far as one man could carry out Rome's purposes, just so far each individual soldier became omnipotent, and could say, " I can do all things through Rome which strengthens me." In those days the Romans deified power, and actually worshiped their own emperors while living, and glorified them as gods when dead, looking upon them as the earthly representatives of power.

When this soldier stood before Christ he said, "My experience has been that as I obey I am also obeyed. I can see that thou hast authority in the unknown spiritual domain; therefore the unseen powers will obey thee exactly as I have learned to obey Rome and to be obeyed by those under me. I appeal to thee, therefore, O Master, to speak the word only, and all will be well." Because of these words our blessed Lord was pleased to say that he had never seen such faith in man. In return for this evidence of faith Jesus gave him all that he desired: "Go thy way; thy servant is healed;" and our Lord actually deigned to marvel.*

Now this incident brings out a very magnificent truth. It teaches us first of all that here is true faith. Faith is not the glib utterance of any form of words or any principle of doctrine, but *faith is the submission of the whole being to the will of the Holy One*, who stands before us as the true representative of authority and government. When our souls, our bodies, and our whole being and property are brought into absolute submission to his will, then, and then only, are we men of faith. Here, of course, we have to do with a different sphere. There the man was only a slave; he was bodily a representative of obedience; in our case it comes to the inner life first. As Christians our spirits must first be submitted, then the will, and the body will follow as an instrument subject to the will and ready to carry out its behests. For this faith Christ praised the centurion, and this alone Christ accepts of us, this

* Christ marveled only twice in all his existence upon earth, so far as we know. Once was on this occasion, when he marveled at the faith of the poor heathen who had come to believe in his power. The other case was when he marveled at the unbelief of the people of his own village, among whom he had been brought up, and where he had lived so many years (Mark vi. 6). He marveled there because of their unbelief; he marvels here because of the belief of a Roman centurion, and said to the whole multitude of enlightened Jews who stood around him, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

only will be the means of introducing us into that blessed life of liberty, peace, rest, and power which we so strongly desire. You will never enter into the life of rest and victory, you will never know what it is to be one with the Father in Christ Jesus through the Spirit, until you have learned the divine law that life is one, that you cannot sever the secular from the spiritual. The one great means by which this unity of life is to be manifested in your business and in your pleasures is by your taking this position and saying, "I am a man under authority."

The unifying principle of life has been exhibited in the temporal sphere in the case of the centurion, but it is also permissible to apply this to the spiritual sphere. Our Lord commends the centurion's faith, but no man has true faith who does not act on the great principle of submission to the Lord Jesus as the supreme representative of authority. From the moment that a man is born into the world he is inclined to evil; the very instincts of his nature lead him astray; and yet we can see that no human being is altogether and hopelessly evil unless he wilfully allies himself to the devil and his ways. That is why Christ, when he condemns the lost to everlasting fire, says, "Go into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels." No man goes to hell, thank God, except the man who sets his face to be like the devil, and therefore becomes a demon and loses every instinct of good. But in human beings, as long as they remain in this world, there is always the possibility of salvation, for there is still in man, no matter how depraved, the possible instinct of turning to God; there is still a desire toward good in what we call his better moments. All who are not converted to God, however, go down, down, down, and are finally completely overcome by Satan; if they are not servants of God, they end by being slaves of the devil. What is their condition? Is it restful, is it a life that flows on in endless song even if worldly blessing fail? No; there is

always unrest. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. lvii. 20, 21). A wicked man may call himself happy, but he always seeks to avoid God, and is ever restless and wretched. But bring that man under the power of the gospel and what happens? He is convicted of sin and realizes immediately that he ought to live a better life, that God requires a holy life. He usually sets about to try to please God by his own efforts. He begins to turn over a new leaf and struggles hard to obey God's law, but the consequence is that there is ten times as much unrest as before his conviction. He becomes so agonized that his soul cannot be still for a moment; he has no pleasure either in heavenly or in earthly things; he is living in bitter distress. But now let that man learn that Christ has made peace with God through his precious blood, and that the cross brings perfect acceptance to any man who believes in Jesus. What happiness follows! He accepts the truth that he is pardoned for Christ's sake. But is he simply pardoned because he believes that Christ died for him? Nay, God forbid; you know the power, I hope, of 2 Corinthians v. 17: "If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation [*καὶνὴ κτίσις*]: old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." Why is that not true experimentally? Because we do not recognize the force of the truth which I wish to impress. When a man truly believes, there has come into that man's very being a new life from God, which is the God-life. This is not given him simply that he may say, "I am saved and am going to heaven;" but Christ has come in to dominate his whole being, to take possession of him forever. How we have slandered our Lord when we have dared to stand before the world and to say, "I am Christ's, because I believe that Christ died for me"! That does not satisfy God. He wants man to be living the divine life in all the power and blessedness of that

unity which pervades the divine life in all with manifold representations. Each of us has but one life; whose is it to be? The moment I am regenerated Christ has entered my heart, and henceforth I am his. Now I stand before the world a saved soul, to say but one thing: "I am a man under authority." If I am Christ's, then his divine life must be poured into my heart, into my soul, into my life, into my body, into my property, into my home, into my business, and into my pleasures. In baptism I became a servant, a soldier of Christ, like the soldier under the Roman imperium, dominated absolutely by his will and his power, so that not a moment or a faculty or a possession is my own.

Brethren, you may hurl my words from you, but you cannot hurl God from you. If you have heard God's Word you must one day answer for it. Do you desire to learn the secret of a restful life, to learn how you can be a man or woman of Christly power? You can only become such in so far as Christ has power over you and takes possession of you, as Rome took possession of her soldiers to make use of them for the glory and the honor of the state. Rome rewarded her soldiers, and do you suppose the Lord will not reward you? He will reward you abundantly when the time comes, but do not think of that at the outset. Think first, "For what am I enrolled; who has taken me into his service, and what life am I now to live?" You are to live a life of obedience to authority; a life in which there is but one dominating power—the omnipotent imperium of the Godhead. To think that he is willing to take us, and to permit us to represent him before men! We feel that we are unworthy of it, as a man might think, "Am I worthy to be a general, to represent Rome and the grand embodiment of authority that is found in the emperor? Can I stand before the world as the representative of the great Cæsar?" He can do it only as Cæsar gives him power, but Cæsar may do as he will. "We have no king but

Cæsar," says the recreant Jew. "We have one king," says the Christian who is living a half-and-half life, "and it is the world's opinion." The Lord Jesus Christ says, "My kingdom is not of this world; it is of heaven." Christian brethren, we have no other king than the Lord's Anointed. "The government shall be upon his shoulders, and of the advance of his authority there shall be no end." Each of us must show that to be true in our own life.

What a lie it is to say that Christ is put in possession of authority by his Father, being seated at God's right hand; that we give him the kingdom, while we are yet bowing before Cæsar—the Cæsar that reigns in the daily life of fashion for the women, the Cæsar that reigns in daily business life for the men, and in the daily life of authority for the clergymen! A man said to me not long ago, "How can the clergy live above their daily bread? You cannot expect it from them. They hang upon the wills of their congregations." Brethren, we have no right before God or man to care what men may say. We are under the authority of Christ, and we must speak his truth. To mince words because men's money is at stake is to deny the authority of the true Emperor; it is to be cowards to our Lord. You would never again be influenced by such sordid motives if you conceived of the Christ-power you ought. It must pain any Christian to think that any child of God could say, "I cannot live above my daily bread; if I offend my people they will turn to Rev. Mr. So-and-So." Will they? What matters that? You are a man under authority. And you, my business brother, take up your banker's book and your balance-sheets, take up your great accounts of all your home and foreign trade; look over them, item by item, and say, "Will they stand the scrutiny of the great Auditor of heaven?" The Auditor of heaven does more than the auditor of earth. The heavenly Auditor looks into the motive back of every transaction and memorandum. We all need to

be commercial Christians, but we are only at liberty to act according to the law of God; to refuse to do so is to deny the power of Jesus.

If we could only get this principle before us it would set at rest all our present troubled condition of soul. You who are exercised about your duties to society, have you ever thought that if Christ were really in authority, and there were no divided life due to the setting up of two principles, all this quibbling about social duties and pleasures would disappear? You must not depend on man's advice or limitations. God is your judge. "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth" (Rom. xiv. 22).^{*} Apply that to your daily life and you will soon settle the questions about this or that partnership or pleasure or business transaction. Can a Christian go into partnership with one who serves man and the devil and never submits his affairs to Christ? How can Christ have fellowship with Belial? Settle it with God, and do not deceive yourself with the idea that you will do good. If you make yourself one with the world on the plea of raising the world to God you will have to pay for it in the day of the Lord's settlement. In these days there is much talk about a longing for power. Christians exclaim, "I want the baptism for power; would to God I had power!" See how Christ has solved the whole thing for us through this centurion. This Roman soldier said, "I am a man under authority, and have soldiers under me." He had learned the art of obeying, and therefore the state could trust him to command and to be obeyed. Learn to obey and you will soon be in command. Christ "learned obedience by the things which he suffered;" therefore "hath God highly exalted him." Beloved, why play the fool about this matter? You would like to *feel*, as one

^{*} 2 Corinthians x. 5 will settle nine out of ten of the difficulties that occur: "Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (Cf. 1 Cor. x. 31.)

said to me. He wanted a physical manifestation of the Holy Ghost, and so he would go through a night of prayer like a Roman Catholic, or perform some great ascetic act in hope of getting power for self. A man will go to an all-night prayer-meeting to get the power of the Holy Ghost. Prayers will do much, but they will do nothing while there is contrariety to God. When you put yourself under authority let the representative of authority say of you, "That man is to be trusted." Why is one man more used than another to-day? Because he obeys; he is not to be flattered, he is not anxious for the opinion of man. Let a man overcome self in the law of obedience, and the Holy Ghost will take him and use him as a vessel fit for the Master's use. All this talk about yearning for power is so much empty breath, so much vanity and conceit, until men have learned this lesson. Put this law into practice. Brethren, I know but one life of joy—I wish I knew it better—it is a life of obedience to Christ's authority.

TRUST

“We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.”—2 CORINTHIANS I. 9, 10.

THE Scriptures of God abound in paradoxes, in difficulties which are absolutely insuperable by the common laws of reason; and yet the more we take them into our souls, instead of puzzling our brains over them, the more we find these paradoxes are not really contradictions, but are blessed truths with two sides, and that they only need the light of God to illumine first one side and then the other in order to reveal them as one grand truth which shall be blessed to the life of the soul.

It is a glorious fact that God must be exalted and man must be humbled, and that just in proportion as man is humbled in his own eyes he is exalted in God's; but if man dares to exalt himself he becomes, not truly humble, but humiliated, and loses the blessing that would otherwise be his through all eternity. It is impossible for God to give his glory to another—that is the lesson which God has been seeking to teach humanity since the day when Adam and Eve fell under the power of the devil. As long as there was no sin in the world man did not seek to rob God of his glory; but the moment that sin came God lost his place of honor in man's heart, and until God is restored to his proper place it is impossible that the designs of God—which are all love, all goodness, all joy,

rest, and peace for the creature—can be fulfilled in man. If men could only learn this blessed truth their life of blessing would begin. If men could only understand that it is not humiliation when they are humbled and brought to a condition of nothingness in the sight of God, they would then be exalted to their position in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. It matters not what we are in the sight of men; it is not a question of what we are in the sight of the creatures in hell; it does not concern us how we stand in regard to the animate or inanimate creation; the one question that concerns every rational being, and must be answered solemnly and truthfully, is, What are we in the sight of God, and what would God make of us if we gave him full control over our lives?

When God created man all was life. Death had never entered the creature, and only existed as an unknown quantity. Though God was compelled in his wondrous wisdom and love to say to man, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," man knew not what was meant by death; it was an unexperienced horror which might strike him, but could not strike him with fear, because he could not conceive of the existence of death as we now understand it. But the moment that man fell the decree of God took effect, and has remained in force ever since—the decree that sin entails death, that sin demands and enforces death, so that sin and life cannot co-exist. Sin not only brings death, but sin *is* death, by reason of the penalty enforced upon the act of sin, which severs us from God; because to be separated from God is to die. Death is not the cessation of existence; death is *separation*. It is necessary that we should realize this, because there are those in the present day—even ministers, in their folly and in their ignorance of the Word of God and the great universe that surrounds us—who teach what they call "eternal death," as if it meant annihilation. Death is neither annihilation nor a cessation of existence; death is simply the separation of one

energy from a person's being, and the removal of a person into another condition. Thus when man died because he sinned he did not cease to exist ; he only separated himself from God, and thus he died in the strictest and most divine sense of the word. Therefore there was found in man henceforth, not life, but spiritual death ; and there has never been life in any person born into this world until that person is given the blessed gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Physical life men may have, mental life they may have, emotional life they may have, and yet they may lack the true and better qualities of life. Notice the poor idiot ; he lives, but he is dead in very life. The madman lives, but he is mentally dead. A man in a condition of syncope lives, and yet it is merely a physical existence ; he breathes, but he is dead to all the outside sounds and surroundings. Thus it is possible to live in death and to be dead in life ; to have one part of one's being in full possession of its faculties, while the other parts are altogether lacking ; and this is death.

The moment that Adam fell he ceased to exist in regard to the life of God ; he lost the life that is called eternal. The purpose of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, when he was revealed from heaven among the children of men, was to re-bestow what Adam had lost, and to endow humanity with something better ; he came to give us back all that we lost in Adam, and also to make us the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty in the fullness of the enjoyment of that wonderful term. Adam could not be called the child of God in the sense in which that term is applied to a Christian. Adam was only a child of nature, with the God of providence and power overruling him ; the Christian is a child of grace, with the God of love and beauty and holiness overruling him.

Faith is the act which God has empowered every creature to perform, and by which we take to ourselves the gifts of God. Thus it is that in the Scriptures eternal life is everywhere

described, not as a possibility through human merit, not as a possession to be attained by labor, but as a gift—"the gift of God is eternal life." What does a man do when he would receive the benefits of that gift? He simply stretches forth his hand and receives it as his own, receives it to himself with all his faculties of gratitude and joy, and then participates in the benefits that accrue from it. Faith, then, is simply claiming from God what God bestows, and thankfully accepting the benefits thereof. Faith may submit blindly in some respects. The world may laugh, but we are not ashamed to say that while our faith is reasonable, reason cannot as yet satisfy itself with regard to everything in which faith must be exercised. Otherwise there would be no room for faith, for the highest faith does not exist where reason has satisfied all these requirements. Faith simply takes what God bestows, and enables man to become a partaker of all the benefits that can accrue from the blessing which God in his grace or goodness is pleased to offer to man. Thus faith is receptive; and faith, when it has received, submits, because it is blind and ignorant, and because it simply accepts the Word of God as infallible.

But while faith is demanded by God from all mankind, because he has endowed man with the possibility of using it, there is another blessed spiritual quality which is of equal importance, and must have full play before one can enter upon this life of privilege which God offers. It is essential that we should have the faith which involves submission to the authority of God—the authority which appears in the gospel dispensation as preëminent love. Thus faith brings grace and secures pardon, peace, and acceptance with God; it secures life and a participation in the very powers and essential attributes of God; it brings to man an indwelling power for life, enabling him to live out that life with which he is endowed by the grace and goodness of God. The Holy Ghost is the source of energy and of ability for all service, sacrifice, and enjoyment.

But still faith brings, through the revelation of God accepted in the soul, all these benefits, and until we by faith take them and claim them for ourselves we have not entered upon the life of blessing.

The first duty of a child of God is to exercise faith by believing God's Word and submitting to his authority; but in order to secure the true blessings of life in action instead of enjoyment we must turn the objective gifts of God into subjective experience of man. We must do this by the exercise of the quality which the Scriptures call TRUST. Faith is totally distinct from trust; they may be called copartners, but are not the same in any sense, and it is essential that we should understand the difference not only of the terms, but also of the action involved in the exercise of faith and of trust. No life of rest, no life of peace and joy and power, can ever be enjoyed until the Christian takes God's gifts by faith, and by trust gives himself into God's hands. By faith we claim our privileges; by trust we prove that we have taken possession of the gifts of God, and that they have become to us what God intended them to be.

Why is it that many have thus far lived so low a life as Christians, and why should so many who call themselves believers not even be so much of believers as the devils?—for they do not even tremble. Alas for the sinners who exceed the devils in unbelief! The very devils believe and tremble; men believe and calmly sneer. But we may be believers in the very best sense of the word, yet we may not have been trusters, and only as such can we really attain to the life of rest and power.

The gospel has a twofold effect wherever it is rightly preached to the unconverted. St. Paul says (2 Cor. ii. 15) that we who preach "are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto

life." The gospel brings those that believe into the possession of life, because they take the gift of God ; it brings a double sentence of death upon those who refuse, because they reject the free offers of God in Christ Jesus. Such a sentence instinctively commends itself to our ideas of propriety and justice. We feel that God could not do otherwise than give life where he has provided it when men have fulfilled the conditions of belief, and that he cannot but refuse life to those who will not submit themselves to the righteousness of God, which is Christ Jesus our Lord. But while we accept those words as applicable to the outside world, have we, as Christians, ever realized that those terms describe the twofold action of the gospel all through our course of life upon earth? The operation of death unto death and of life unto life never ceases in the believer from the moment that he first accepts the gift of God, which is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Many Christians fail to realize that wherever the gospel carries its proper force it is continually handing over to death what is of death, and passing on into brighter and more abundant life that which is really the life of God in us. Therefore St. Paul goes on to say (2 Cor. iv. 10) that we are "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."* He then adds, "So then death worketh in us, but life in you." He means, I suppose, that every man who of his own free will gives over to the death whatever is of death—whatever is mortal, of the earth, corrupt—finds that life comes into that part which he has given to the death ; he finds that death leads to life, and that this is the only way to live.

Nothing humbles a man so much as the gospel, for it causes us to realize our own impotence and worthlessness. Many

* A contradiction of terms, apparently ; nay, simply a paradox, but a paradox that is perfectly explicable by the teaching of God in the Holy Ghost.

have thought that they could obtain eternal life by labor. I would to God that, convinced of the folly of trusting to self-righteousness as a means of receiving eternal life, we might never forget the solemn fact that after receiving, like poor beggars, the gift of life through Jesus Christ, our life is no longer ours, but his; we cannot live it, he must live it in us; we cannot work it out, he must work his will in us. But against that life of God in Christ Jesus which the Holy Ghost would carry out in us there arises a militant body of enormous force within us, resisting the Holy Ghost at every point, so that the Holy Ghost must work his way point by point throughout our being. How is this to be obtained? First by the recognition of the fact, and then by the glad submission of faith to the will of God, and then by determinedly throwing overboard anything that would be an obstacle to the life of the Christ, and then by yielding the whole self to God. Begin by yielding, for trust is the outcome proper of yielding. Your nature is dead; therefore you must give up death to death, and take the life which is his gift and say, "It is thy life, let it reign; I yield all, but I have Him;" and the life of the Son of God will be manifest even in your mortal body, and of course still more in your soul and spirit.

This idea of trust is illustrated in the case of the Apostle Paul in connection with the trouble which befell him in Asia, and for which he sought relief on every hand (2 Cor. i. 8). There has been much argument as to what was the trouble of which he speaks, but I care not what the occasion was; it suffices to say that in Paul's experience there came a moment when he realized that he was in the very face of death, and the pressure upon him was so great that it seemed impossible for him to obtain deliverance. He looked out, he looked around, he even looked up; but it seemed as if there was no possibility of escape. At last he looked in; and then he says, "Moreover we have the sentence of death in ourselves." He

looked in as a man might who is in a sinking ship in the midst of the broad Atlantic, and who realizes from the face of the captain and the sailors that there is no hope, no possibility of a near sail, no life-boat ready, and who at last looks within and says, "It is death; there is no escape." But just as human despair seizes upon him, St. Paul turns from man, he turns from circumstances, he turns from all earthly conditions, and he looks up into the face of God and says, "We have the sentence of death in ourselves," that what?—"that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead." Like Abraham on Mount Moriah, in one instant his gaze goes up to God, and he feels that God can deliver, but no one else can. So this man Paul felt that there was no deliverance in man, no hope in himself, but that this was the moment for trusting God, for giving up his whole being to him. This is trust far more than faith; faith takes, trust gives; by trust you commit into the hand of God, with perfect certainty of deliverance and blessing, that which in itself brought you nothing but the absolute certainty of death.

This is very humbling, but the gospel was never meant to pander to man's pride. Men would like to go to heaven by human toil; they would like to do great works for the glory of them; Christian ministers would like to feel that a magnificent sermon had led to great results upon the world at large. No, my brother, my sister, you must learn that you first must come to the point of despair of self and of everything that is human, and then you must look into the face of God and acknowledge that he alone can help you, and then he will give you deliverance. "He hath delivered me from so great a death, and doth deliver," says St. Paul. But what about the future? "In whom we trust that he will yet deliver us." Past, delivered; present, doth deliver; future, he will deliver.

Men too frequently say to themselves, "Well, I have no one else to trust to, so I will say that I trust God. I would take

a man if I could find him ; I would trust myself if I dared ; I would look to the undertaker to keep me out of the coffin if it were possible ; but because he cannot I will try to say that I will trust God." Do you think God is going to let you sneak into heaven in that way? Do you think God will give you the place of honor when you give him the place of humiliation? Give God the glory. How? By coming to this blessed condition which St. Paul describes in himself. When you look in as well as around and see no prospect but death, then look quietly up into God's face and say, "Now, Lord! Now, Lord!" For twenty years those two little words have been the greatest help of my life—"Now, Lord!"

Brother clergy, you know what it is to be engaged in making the finest sermon that ever a man preached, and when you have finished sundry beautiful sentences, and are just evolving with the travail of spiritual toil the most perfect sentence of that very perfect sermon, suddenly the door of your study is assailed, and in comes the little domestic and says, "Mr. Tompkins wants to see you." He has spoiled the best sentence that human mind ever made! "Bother Mr. Tompkins!" Never say "bother" again. Because the very moment that there comes the knock at the door which has spoiled the best production that humanity ever enjoyed, God can step in and give a better still. When I lived in the country, and was working away at my sermons on Saturday, my neighbors' cows used to break into my garden and spoil that "best sermon," until I learned that even on Saturday morning into a parson's study there could come the living God, who could manage the sermon better than I could. If you will only learn that trust comes when you have reached despair you will have learned something which in addition to the doctrine of faith will make your life a life of rest, calm, and power. I love to feel now that when ten times the interruptions come in a London study compared with what I used to have in the country, my Lord

is still sufficient for it, but that he wishes a servant who despairs of himself. You must despair before you can rest; you must give up before you can receive; you must give out before you can enjoy the blessed inflowing of the Holy Ghost as the revealer of Christ Jesus the Lord.

But there is something further which is meant by this word *trust*. It is very distinct in the original from our word *faith*. *Faith* is πίστις; *trust* is πέποιθα; πεποίθῃσις, the noun, only comes six times in the New Testament, and is only once translated *trust*.* In the other five passages it is translated *confidence*, a very blessed word, but it is not the same as *trust*, because confidence and boldness (παρρησία) are the outcome of faith and trust. Faith takes into the soul what God in his mercy reveals, and believes God against all comers. Trust hands over to God what God has given us and says, "Keep, Lord, and use, for I cannot." Then comes a holy confidence and assurance of soul which prevents us from ever being disturbed under any circumstances whatever, and out of that confidence there comes a boldness which enables us to act for the glory of God. Faith, when it has conceived, bringeth forth trust; and trust, when it is finished, bringeth forth confidence and boldness.

These two, faith and trust, will be exercised in different ways. It is a noteworthy fact that in almost every case faith is described as exercising itself to do what is already complete. It takes the word of God, which is already spoken; it takes the work of God, which is already accomplished; it takes the Son of God, who is already provided; it takes the Holy Ghost, who has already come to give life and power to every man who will receive it. Faith is always taking that which is already provided for us by God, and it matters not that we cannot fully understand; we believe God's word, because we believe that he cannot lie.

* "Such trust have we through Christ to Godward" (2 Cor. iii. 4).

But now we must go a step further in order to be fully blessed in every part of our lives. We must now evince active trust in God by throwing ourselves upon him in the despair of self and of everything earthly and human, with the conviction that as we abandon ourselves to him he will undertake for us and carry out his purposes in us. You may think that it is very presumptuous for a man to make such a demand of God, especially in connection with your earthly business.

A friend went one morning to the house of the great Sir Robert Peel, and found him with a large number of letters lying before him; he was bowed over them in prayer. The friend retired, and returning a little later, said, "I beg your pardon for intruding upon your private devotions." Sir Robert replied, "No, those were my public devotions; I was just giving the affairs of state into the hands of God, for I could not manage them." If you will just hand the letter-bag over to the Lord you will find that you can trust it to him. It may contain vital matters to your firm, to your nation, perhaps, which you think only you can manage. Try trusting the living God with your letter-bag or your housekeeping; do not ever fret or fidget again; put everything into his hands and say, "Now, Lord, undertake for me." That is quite distinct from faith. For instance, I am in a very difficult situation, and a friend tells me of a very able lawyer. He says, "I forget his name, but I will write to you, giving you his address." I receive a letter from him the next morning containing the name and address of the lawyer. I have faith in my friend's word and in the letter that contains the name and address of the lawyer. I have not yet trusted him at all, but now I go down to his office and put my secrets and difficulties into his hands and say, "Take them, and I will leave them without a fret in your hands." He looks at them and says, "I can manage this affair without the slightest trouble. I can win your case without a shadow of a doubt." I go out calm and

confident, because I have faith in the power of that lawyer, and because I have trusted my case in his hands.

Henry Varley used to tell how, when he was in America, he once walked down to a river's edge in the dead of winter, and thought that the ice looked rather peculiar. A friend who was with him said, "It will bear; go on." He put out his stick and felt his way along until he suddenly saw a fellow come down with a team of four horses and drive right over the ice. Then he said, "I can trust it." That is human trust—trust in earthly things; trust in God steps out into the dark and gives everything into his hands though everything seems hopeless.

In the Bible faith is distinguished from trust in that by faith we take Jesus Christ, and trust takes us to God through Christ. Let us see how it acts. Notice how sin is treated of in the Epistle to the Romans. First there is the sense of guilt. Faith takes the doctrine that in Christ God was satisfied in regard to me as a sinner; trust goes to God through Christ and says, "I have now no fear of judgment. I walk up to God with perfect confidence as to my guilt, for it is put away." Then faith takes the word of God that Christ is a Saviour from the power of sin; trust steps out into the place of difficulty into which God calls me, believing that the Christ will really deliver me. Faith takes the doctrine that I am delivered from the action of death in sin; trust, when I yield myself to God as a man that is alive from the dead, passes my whole being into God's hands for keeping, for power, for service. Faith takes the fact that there is no condemnation; trust believes that there is no separation, and that I am joined to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Thus trust is to be exercised in every department of salvation.

God alone knows your trial, and he will help you. Look your trial right in the face and say, like St. Paul, "I cannot escape; I despair; the sentence is death." A dear one may be dying, or the fell sentence of the physician may be upon your-

self; the dark trial of poverty may stare you in the face. You say, "I try to believe in a God of love, but I am very greatly troubled; I cannot rest night or day." My friend, faith is not enough there; you must trust. You desired life, and the answer came death. Now trust, trust. Alexander the Great had a physician at his court who was his bosom friend, and we are told that Alexander loved him greatly. One day there came an anonymous letter on a waxed tablet to the king, which read: "O king, thy physician purposes to kill thee; there is treachery in thy court. He will kill thee by the draft which he gives thee to-morrow, under the plea of healing thee." The king put that waxed tablet into his breast, and the next day, when the physician came to give him the draft that was for the healing of his body, he put out his left hand and took the cup, and at the same time with his right hand he pulled forth the waxed tablet from his breast and handed it to the physician, and said, "Friend, I trust thee," and drank the potion before he had even stopped a moment to see the effect of that letter upon the physician. That was trust. My brother, I know not what God's draft for you may be, but

"The great Physician now is near,
The sympathizing Jesus;
He speaks the doubting heart to cheer —
Oh, hear the voice of Jesus!"

How dare you doubt the great Physician! How dare you say, "My God, I cannot, I cannot go forward"! Believe that the Lord can. Despair of self; the Lord comes in when you put out your soul toward him. It is not enough to believe that Jesus is the great Physician; you must trust him. We trust the steamer every time we cross the ocean; we trust the cook every time we partake of food. What fools we are that we do not trust God when he tells us to look up to him and lean hard upon him through Jesus!

Lastly, there is service in business, service in the home, service in the church, service in the Sunday-school; and you are saying, "I cannot, I cannot!" How often ministers settle down to write a sermon and say, "There is not a text in the Bible that will do"! I one day said to Spurgeon, "Brother Spurgeon, did you ever find it difficult to get a text from which to preach? The Bible sometimes seems to me like a blank wall from beginning to end, without a text in it." Spurgeon replied, "That is what I sometimes feel. When I was a young lad in Cambridge I lived in a very narrow street where the roofs of the houses were very high. My room was not a pleasant one; there was nothing to look at but roofs. I began one Monday to look for a text. I could not find one. Tuesday came and I had none—Wednesday, Thursday, Friday—and Saturday I was in despair. I said, 'Well, Lord, I suppose that in the country I will get a text.' So I started out to go for a walk; but just then there came a rain, and I had no chance of leaving my room. Four o'clock came and there was not a text in the Bible. All at once I heard a twitter, twitter, twitter, and there were a whole flock of sparrows under the eaves just outside of my window, pecking at a canary. I had my text in a moment: 'Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird, the birds round about are against her.'"^{*} God gave him his sermon, and when you come to despair in yourself God comes to the rescue.

In 1860 I went for the first time to see York Cathedral. I reached there about seven o'clock in the evening, and sat down in a corner. I happened when a child to lose my left eye, and I did not see that there was a man sitting next to me. I was suddenly moved by the beauty of the place to say aloud, "What a grand building! what a wonderful building! how splendid! thank God!" A voice at my side said,

^{*} Jeremiah xii. 9.

"Yes, it is very beautiful." I turned, and there at my left sat an old man about seventy-five years of age, in a smock-frock, with a stick in his hand; he looked very sad, and very, very hungry. After talking with him for a moment I put my hand in my pocket and pulled out eighteenpence (thirty-six cents)—I was a poor fellow and had very little money. I know not why I did it. In an instant the old man said, as I rose up to go, "Stop, sir; you won't be ashamed to take an old man's blessing, will you? Do you know what you have done for me? You have just saved my life. I had word last evening that my daughter was dying, so I started off and walked into York last night, and arrived with fourpence in my pocket. I went to a lodging-house, and found they would give me a dirty bed for twopence and a clean one for fourpence. Father always told me to keep clean, and I did not think, though I was hungry, that he would wish me to go to bed dirty; so I took the clean bed for fourpence, and trusted Father. I came here at seven o'clock this morning to Father's house, that I might talk to him, and I have been waiting until Father sent the bread. I knew he would send it, and you are his messenger." I said, "You don't mean that you have been here since seven o'clock this morning?" "Yes." "It is seven o'clock at night; and have you had nothing?" He said, "I have just been waiting Father's time. It is Father's time now, and he has sent you." I put my hand into my pocket and took out all I had—three or four pounds—and said, "Take what you like." He looked me in the face and said, "Sir, how dare you! Father told you what to give, and do you suppose he doesn't know how to find more when it is needed? I cannot touch a penny that Father did not send. You have given all that Father wanted me to have, bless you!" And he gave me such a blessing, putting his hands on my shoulders and praying to God to use me all through life, and

to make me a vessel to carry God's grace ; and that old man's prayer has clung to me for thirty-five years, and I bless God for it. My brethren, despair of self, and then trust in the living God, "who hath delivered, and doth deliver : in whom we trust that he will yet deliver."

FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS:

PETER AND JOHN BEFORE AND AFTER PENTECOST

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.”—ACTS IV. 13.

THE whole sanhedrim, the ecclesiastical council of the Jews, had met to deliberate upon a very remarkable case which had occurred before the eyes of the whole city. A lame man above forty years of age, who never had walked from his mother's womb, had suddenly been seen to leap up, to stand, to walk, and to enter joyfully into the temple with two peasants from Galilee, and there to sing the praises of God. When this learned council endeavored to discover the causes which had given rise to such a marvelous event nothing more could be discovered to account for it than that the men who had wrought this wonderful cure said it was in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth that this lame man was enabled to rise up and walk; furthermore, as the members of the council observed these men and consulted concerning them, they were compelled to acknowledge that the wonder workers had been with Jesus, but the marvel remained unintelligible to them all.

This striking narrative is one of the Christian's battle-axes wherewith to meet the infidel or the opponent of the divine revelation; because historically there is now no question among critics, however severe or high they may be, that the

Acts of the Apostles contains the record of facts which are incontrovertible.* The account of this miracle stands as a magnificent testimony to the truth of the gospel, and to the marvelous power which Christ can give to those who put their trust in him, however feeble, however foolish they may appear in the eyes of the world.

The world would think it a very marvelous thing indeed if in these days two common peasants from one of our country villages were brought and placed before the learned, the ecclesiastical, and the temporal power of one of our great cities, and could prove in the face of the whole assembly that they had wrought an incontrovertible miracle in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. But there is still power in the gospel to meet its opponents on every hand. What can the world ever say when two such unlearned and ignorant men, with no ecclesiastical authority, come forward without one shadow of doubt or fear, and stand calm and collected in the presence of the greatest power before which the Jewish nation could bring any culprit, and can quietly say, "We are not anxious or troubled concerning this matter; we simply tell you that in the name and through faith in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth this man stands before you whole"? But this is not all. It is not only a glorious miracle arguing for the truth of the gospel, but under it there lies a spiritual principle to which I wish to direct your attention. In the picture before us we have a very remarkable proof of the power which the Lord Jesus

* It is quite unnecessary in the present instance to argue as to the authenticity and the credibility of the Book of Acts, though that may be done on other occasions. As believers in God's holy Word we accept the records upon the basis upon which they have been established, and can say without hesitation, I hope, that from Genesis i. 1 to Revelation xxii. 21 we believe every word in that blessed Book to have come direct from God; that is, in the original. At the same time we may gladly use the natural faculties given to us to place against our enemies the argument which they cannot answer.

Christ confers upon those who, in the spiritual and deeper sense of the words, have been with him.

In the life of Christ on earth there were several stages, and it was not until he was raised from the dead by God the Father that the real greatness of his power began to be felt over the world at large. It is only as we come into the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus Christ that we too become partakers of his power; we are intended to live that resurrection life in all the glories of the ascended existence at the right hand of God, just as Jesus Christ lives it, limited only by our imperfection of body, mind, and spirit. I am convinced that many feel that such a life is practically impossible for the large majority even of earnest Christians. They can see that it is very beautiful and desirable, and may be attained by a few, but they think that for ordinary men of business, or for women surrounded by the difficulties of society and home life, these things are literally impossible. This mighty resurrection power, this glorious life of rest, peace, privilege, and possibility in the presence of the most potent foes that can be brought to bear against us, is, however, exhibited in the case of men who had not even one half of the advantages which we possess; therefore, to say that it is not possible for me is to falsify the teaching of the gospel of Christ as transmitted to us; it is to come short of the glory of God, and to bring shame and dishonor upon our Christian profession. Whatever shame it may cost you to think of your past, I beseech you to realize that it *is* possible for you to live henceforth a life of holiness and of power, and to glorify God before all the world in your spirit and your body, which are his. It is possible just in proportion as we have been with Jesus, not only, as some teach, in the sense of following Christ as imitators of his earthly life, simply admiring the *man* for his self-sacrifice and for the beauty of his character and conduct, but, deeper far than all that, we must be with Jesus in the actual realities of

his death, his burial, his resurrection, and his ascension to the throne of God the Father. It was only this which enabled those poor unlearned peasants to speak that day in terms that could not be controverted even by the sanhedrim of Jerusalem itself.

If we trace out from the Holy Scriptures the characters of these two men, Peter and John, prior to this event, we will observe that in every point they furnish us with illustrations of the very infirmities, the very faults, the very failures,* of which we speak as being unavoidable. But they also illustrate the wonders which the Lord God can work in men who have truly entered into fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, in his sufferings, in his resurrection, and in the power of the Spirit which he is now enabled to bestow.

The Apostle Peter loved the Lord Jesus as I suppose very few of us have ever loved him. If any man could be said to have had a grand passion toward another Peter might be said to have felt such a love toward the person of Jesus, the Teacher from Galilee. He loved his Lord with an ineffable love, as a leader, as a friend, as an exalted instructor, and as a pattern. He himself says that he had given up all to follow him, as very few of us have done. But although Peter is a pattern of impassioned, devoted friendship for the Lord Jesus Christ as his Leader and Guide, it is a remarkable fact that in all the four Gospels there is not a single instance recorded concerning Peter in which he did not fail and fall, even up to the very night of our Lord's crucifixion.

St. Matthew begins his historical account of our Saviour's ministry at the fourteenth chapter of his Gospel, after he has

* I do not mean to traduce the great men of God, but to glorify God by showing what a wonderful transformation Jesus can work in men who up to a certain point in their existence were unquestionably two of the most pitiable failures ever described to men, but who at a later period in their lives illustrate the beauty of holiness.

recorded that great sermon containing the seven parables. From that point onward we read in every chapter that Peter falls into some despicable sin, some mean folly of which we should be rightly ashamed, and yet for which we try to excuse ourselves.

In the fourteenth chapter we read that our Lord is walking upon the waves the night after he has fed the five thousand. Peter sees him, and with his impetuous love and devotion cries out, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." Jesus answers, "Come." Peter steps out upon the water; but suddenly he sinks, and the Master is obliged to reproach him at once with the sin of all sins of which we are guilty: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Are you in your experience thus far a companion of Peter?

A little later Peter comes to Jesus and says (fifteenth chapter) that he does not at all understand the parable with regard to the uncleanness of the natural heart; he says, "I cannot think that the heart of man is really as bad as you say." The Lord again has to rebuke Peter and say, "Do not even you who profess to follow me understand the depravity of man, the vileness of the human heart, and the utter hopelessness of man's natural life?"

Again, in the same chapter, Peter stands before Christ with the other disciples when the poor woman from Tyre and Sidon is asking that her daughter may be delivered from the devil, and it is Peter who voices the thoughts of them all when he says to Jesus, "Send her away; for she crieth after us." Do you, my brother, my sister, recognize no kinship with Peter in this desire to shut out others who may draw away the attention of the Lord from yourself?

In the sixteenth chapter Peter makes that grand confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." But very shortly after that Peter has to be spoken to by Christ in these

words: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Peter, who loves Jesus and speaks of following him with all his heart and soul, actually has to be denominated Satan, the darkest name that could be given to a man by the mouth of the tender Jesus, because he is trying to obtain the crown without ever bearing the cross.

The Master takes Peter, James, and John into the mount to witness the transfiguration (chapter seventeen), and Peter steps to the front and says, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: . . . let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias"—not knowing what he said. Again the desire to gain the crown without the cross, for which he had just before been rebuked; the hope of glory without the suffering; always seeking rewards from the Lord without bearing the pains of the Master's agony.

Again Peter comes before the Lord when he has been teaching men about forgiveness and love (eighteenth chapter), and he says, "How often am I to do this? Am I to forgive my brother seven times?" "Not seven," says Jesus, "but seventy times seven." Ah, brethren, has Christ ever spoken to you as he spoke to Peter? You must learn to forgive on and on forever, even as God the Father, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you.

The nineteenth chapter describes Peter standing before the Lord and saying, "We have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" A bargaining with Christ for rewards because of the devotion to service which sprang from love, but which is calculating how much it can obtain from the Christ of what it really desires.

In the twentieth chapter we read that ten disciples are bitterly indignant against two, because two have come with their mother to ask for the best place in the kingdom. Peter must therefore have been one of the grumblers, who were fearing

lest a better place might be given to James and John than they could hope to enjoy. It is a sad picture.

In the twenty-sixth chapter* we enter upon the history of the last days of our Lord's life. There are no less than three distinct failures on the part of Peter narrated in this one chapter. In the thirty-third verse he says, boastfully, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." Soon, however, we find him following Jesus afar off, after having slept in the garden. He runs away from his Lord when persecution arises, and tries to sneak into the back door of the palace of the high priest to see if he cannot obtain tidings of what is happening. There he sits warming himself among the enemies of Jesus, and three times declares with an oath, "I tell you I know not the man."

It may seem somewhat uncharitable to call attention to the faults of Peter in this way, but I have done it to show that although he followed Jesus with peculiar heart-devotion for three whole years, yet on the last night of Jesus' earthly life—after these three years of fellowship—the Master was compelled to say to him, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and *when thou art converted*, strengthen thy brethren."

Now consider for one moment the character of John. There is much less recorded concerning him during our Lord's life than concerning Peter, who was always pushing to the front; but in all the record of Jesus' life upon earth not one good word is said about John up to the night of our Lord's death, when John leaned on the Saviour's breast. In every historical statement concerning John we find the same evil characteristics, the same failure, faults, feebleness, and sin, which we have noticed in his brother apostle. John is present with Peter and James at the transfiguration of Christ, and he

* From the twenty-first chapter through the twenty-fifth we have our Lord's teachings following the triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the Sunday before he was crucified.

falls asleep like the others when he should have been awake. Not long after, as the son of Zebedee, he says, "Shall we call down fire upon these people because they will not receive thee?" What narrow bigotry and censorious sinfulness are here shown by John, the apostle of love! He wishes to call down fire from heaven upon any man who will not do just as *he* thinks he should. Again (Mark x. 37) he comes with his brother and says, "Lord, give us the best places in the kingdom of heaven, on thy right and thy left." This was the man whose character and epistles we have so much admired, and yet, like Peter, John who lay on Christ's bosom, John who whispered secrets into Christ's ear and had the secrets of Christ whispered into his ear, falls fast asleep in the garden of Gethsemane, runs away like a coward when danger comes, and enters the hall of the high priest only because he happens to be acquainted with some one there.

This is the history of these two men up to the night of Christ's death. Nine weeks later they again come to our notice in the events recorded in these early chapters of the Acts; but did you ever realize that such a change in men's character and conduct was possible as we see in these two apostles? Are you prepared to apply the parable to yourself?

John, the Boanerges, the "son of thunder," who in former days was seeking to obtain the best place in Christ's kingdom, now stands up meek, gentle, patient, and silent, without uttering one word, so far as we know, throughout the course of the narrative. In some mysterious way his natural hotness of temper, the readiness to speak, the desire for chief place, are held in check, and he allows Peter to have the whole credit for the miracle, and the opportunity of speaking. Peter, the coward who nine weeks before was afraid of a maid-servant and cursed and swore that he knew not Jesus of Nazareth, now stands boldly before the whole multitude in the streets and says, "Ye murderers, ye desired a murderer to be given

up unto you, and ye killed the Prince of life." Then he and John go before the council which has their lives in its hands, and Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, says, quietly and calmly, "We are not at all anxious concerning this matter, nor do we care a straw for what you say; we can but speak the things which we have seen and heard. If you ask us how that man was cured, know that it is by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God hath raised up, that this man stands before you whole." It is a wonderful change: the coward has become a very lion in boldness; the man that was full of bitterness and censorious bigotry has become a very lamb in gentleness. There is a marvelous transformation in each of them; they have become bold, tender, humble, brave, patient, loving, and full of pity, in a way that is altogether unaccountable until we apprehend the cause.

The sanhedrim made inquiry concerning these men; they inquired in all directions by what possible means these peasants could have been able to perform such a miracle and now could boldly stand there before them. They perceived them to be unlearned and ignorant men, and all that they could discover with regard to them was that they had been with Jesus.

In these days, when there is a tendency even in some churches to abandon the doctrine of the atonement by the vicarious sacrifice of Christ and propitiation through his blood, and when men are beginning to preach only the nobility of the life of Christ, and to beg men simply to follow him in the beautiful simplicity of his character and conduct, assuring them that this is all that is necessary to bring them into conformity to his image, it is well for us to consider how different the gospel of Christ is from such teaching. Here are two men who of all men in the world would be cited as men devoted to Jesus the Teacher. No man ever gave up more than these men gave up, or followed Jesus more closely, or studied more earnestly to be conformed to his image, than did Peter and

John. Three years of perpetual fellowship with him in the flesh, daily seeing the beauty of his character, produce nothing in them but miserable failure in their own character and conduct. But nine weeks after Christ's death they are completely changed. Can you explain the cause of such a change? I find the explanation in the words of the sanhedrim—spoken all unconscious of their deep meaning—"They had been with Jesus." They had been in companionship with Jesus, but that sufficed not. They had been following Jesus, but that sufficed not. They had been learning of Jesus, but that sufficed not. Then where had they been with Jesus to bring about such wondrous results?

Remember that these two are the only ones of all the disciples whom history describes as having gone through the scenes of Christ's trial and death, visiting the grave, and then, with the other disciples, seeing him after his resurrection, and being made partakers of the promise of the Father, the gift of the Holy Ghost, upon the day of Pentecost. Here stand these two men on the Passover night, feeble, faulty failures, as all must acknowledge. But after Jesus has been taken away to the high priest's hall John first comes out with the words, "I think that I am just well enough acquainted with the people there to get into the council-hall; and, Peter, we shall be able to see what is happening there." "No," says Peter, "I cannot face it; it is too much." But John goes in and listens. By and by some one tells him that his friend Peter is at the door, and he goes out and speaks to him. Peter comes sneaking inside the hall, but at first stands in the dark, and then gradually he draws nearer to the fire out by the door. It was there that the maid accused him, and that he cursed and swore that he knew not Jesus. But the Lord turned and looked on Peter, and gave another look, I suppose, to John, who was also in the hall. My brother, my sister, has Christ given you such a look? Jesus stood at the bar in that judg-

ment-hall as your representative, and he who gave his life for you will one day look at you from his own judgment-seat. Will he look as he looked at Peter, his glance penetrating into his very heart and telling him, "You are a coward, you are a liar, you are a vile, miserable deserter"? He would not speak it; only his eye said it; but one look and Peter's heart was broken; he went out and wept bitterly when he thought how he had basely denied his Lord.

John is the only man of all Christ's friends, so far as we know, who stands beneath the cross of Jesus. By his side is Jesus' mother, and Jesus, looking on the disciple whom he loved, says, "Behold thy mother." Those words and that look broke the heart of John and taught him love. Peter had learned his lesson by a look, and now John by a look and the words from the cross learned what no other disciple ever learned; he saw right into the heart of Jesus as he hung upon Calvary's cross, and Jesus' death became to him what it was to no other man upon earth; from that time both Peter and John began to see the meaning of the death of the Son of man, but as yet they understood no further. He died, and they loved him and entered into his death, but they had not yet progressed any further by faith.

Now the third day after this scene, early in the morning, there comes a woman—bless the women! they are always to the front in their trust in Jesus—Mary comes as the first messenger from the grave to Peter and John, and she says, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him." Out go Peter and John, the *only* two, and the one outruns the other and stands looking wonderingly into the sepulcher; the other, Peter, rushing up afterward, enters into the grave, sees it all, and retires; John, we are told, "saw and believed." It is now not only death, it is resurrection. They have the resurrection truth in their souls. John is the first of all the disciples to believe the grand

truth that the Son of man should suffer upon Calvary's cross, should rise the third day, and that forevermore death hath no more dominion over him. Consequently when Jesus comes to the Lake of Galilee to visit the fishermen in their distress, it is John who says, with the perception of faith that none of the others have, "It is the Lord." What a blessing it would be if we had faith to be the first to discern the Lord! Now the impetuous Peter dashes through the water to the shore and throws himself at Jesus' feet. Jesus had already given a special revelation to Peter on the day of his resurrection, and yet Peter had not believed. His heart was hardened concerning the truth of the resurrection, until Jesus came that morning to the Sea of Galilee; then Peter, too, saw and believed, and from that moment was a changed man.

Now the Lord has one word to say concerning each of these two. To Peter he says, "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." Peter was to die a martyr's death; he was to learn what it meant to follow Jesus, not by the mere force of example, but in the power of the cross, in the power of the resurrection, and in the power of the life which Jesus bestowed when he breathed upon them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." They became endowed with a gift which they did not yet understand, but which was nevertheless theirs by possession and possibility. They were obliged to wait for the full comprehension of it until Pentecost, when they saw its force and its power. Concerning John, Jesus says, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." Peter knows that he must be a martyr for Christ; John hopes that he may live to see the Master return. Notice the difference, and you will be struck immediately by the remarkable contrast in their teaching from that time forward.

Just forty days after our Lord's resurrection he ascends into heaven; ten days later the disciples, who have returned rejoicing from Mount Olivet to Jerusalem, are, with one accord, in one place gathered together for prayer. It is the day of Pentecost, and the Holy Ghost is poured out on that little company. Now see the change in those two men. The coward who cringed before a common servant-maid at the door, and swore that he never knew who Jesus was, stands out boldly before all Jerusalem and preaches in the name of Jesus, through the power of the Holy Ghost, on every street corner. St. Luke gives us some report of his sermon, and shows how Peter on that day was enabled to preach so that three thousand believed. Instead of the quarrelsome bitternesses that pervaded the company up to the night of Christ's crucifixion, they now have all things in common. Peace and power shine out on this little band of men, but especially upon Peter and John, because they had been with Jesus as no other men in the world had been; they had gone with him to the trial, they had gone with him to the cross, they had gone to the grave to see its meaning, and they had now received the Holy Ghost, the promise of the Father. In nine weeks men who before could only sneak cowardly away are now winning souls by thousands to God, because they preached in the power of the resurrection, in the power of the cross, and in the power of the Holy Ghost whom the Christ had sent.

Now I challenge any man to say whether he need be in despair and think, "Oh, it is all very well for some men, but it is not possible for one like me." The devil is a liar from the beginning, and he is at it now with you if you are trying to sink down with a false diffidence—which is, after all, but imagination and self-seeking—and are saying, "It is not for me." It is because you seek your own ease in Zion; but those who are at ease in Zion have a curse instead of a blessing.*

* Amos vi. 1.

Would you know how this miracle on the lame man was wrought by Peter and John? Peter says, "Why do you marvel, as though by our power or holiness we have wrought this deed? It is done through the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth." What God could do for two men like Peter and John he must be able to do for you. You dare not deny that the Lord could take you, if he chose, and make you a vessel consecrated and meet for the Master's use, if you were purged from the carnal nature which up to the night of Christ's death had the ascendancy in the lives of these two men, but who were afterward so remarkably used of God. From that night Peter was never again afraid; and although he once dissembled at Antioch, yet how beautifully he confessed his folly! Paul writes to the Galatians that he had to rebuke Peter before them all. Peter, writing some time afterward, says, "Study the scriptures of our beloved brother Paul." The man who rebuked him face to face is the man to whom he gives the very highest praise, and bids men read what Paul had written, though in so doing they would read words of condemnation against himself. That manifests a great difference between the old Peter and the new.

But what about the "son of thunder," John, the censorious, narrow, and bigoted? He is the man in whose writings we find the word *love* from beginning to end. Tradition tells us that when he was too old to preach he was carried every day in his chair to the temple, and with the broken voice of age whispered over and over again, "Little children, love one another." This is your Boanerges—somewhat changed, is he not?

Now as to their teachings: have you ever studied those two epistles of Peter and the three epistles of John to discover the root idea in each? In the epistles of Peter you will discover that we have, condensed as perhaps nowhere else in Scripture, the principles, the privileges, and the precepts touch-

ing the whole life of a Christian in the most marvelous manner. And yet Peter was the man who knew that he was to die a martyr's death, and was looking forward to speedily putting off his old tabernacle. Is it not remarkable that in his writings we have more about the second coming of Christ than anywhere else (except in Thessalonians), as if Peter expected to see Christ? Peter knew that it mattered not whether he lived or died so far as his expectation of the coming of our Lord was concerned. He writes: "The coming of the Lord draws near, and the day will come as a thief in the night. Let us therefore grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." John, who had before him the hope of living to see his Saviour's return, never says one word about it. Why? Because it might be thought that he was only living in expectation of that return, and therefore that he was not a practical man. He says, "You must live for the moment; you must live in love; you must live as if the world were going on forever; you must live for one another; you must live to show practical power through the love that Jesus showed to you, and which now pervades every Holy-Ghost-endued man." He emphasizes the Christian life.

If God could accomplish so wonderful a change in two common peasants who had no learning at all, what is he to do with the people of America and England, with all their great advance and their intellectual display? Never again boast of moral and intellectual superiority unless you show it, and if you show it you need not boast it. How are you to show it? Having intellectual and scientific acuteness, consecrate it to Christ Jesus your Lord by going with him through his death; come out by the power of the Holy Ghost on the resurrection side; take the life that God gives, the very life of Christ, and henceforth and forever act as Peter and John acted, in the strength of the Holy Ghost, in the name of Jesus Christ, and to the glory of God the Father.

TRUE DEVOTION:

ILLUSTRATED BY THE LOVE OF JONATHAN FOR DAVID.

“The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. . . . Then Saul’s anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman [or, “Thou son of perverse rebellion”], do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion? . . . For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom.”—1 SAM. XVIII. 1; XX. 30, 31.

“IS Saul also among the prophets?” Unquestionably he is, but with none of the Spirit of God by whom God deigns to speak through his holy children. Saul is a prophet in that dark and mysterious manner in which God has been pleased at times to speak through the wicked, though they have been all unconscious of the meaning of their own words as containing some of the greatest truths which have ever been brought home to the hearts of men. The blessed truth here propounded, and one which we should all know and accept for our own eternal salvation, is this: “Thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, for so long as he lives upon the ground, thy kingdom can never be established.”

Here we have another of the Scripture paradoxes or apparent contradictions, which are absolutely unintelligible to the uninitiated, but which present a truth, clear and powerful, to those who have been initiated into the divine mysteries. It

is indeed a paradox which the world will never understand that men should be said to act wisely when they choose another to be their lord, their king, of whom they know but little at first, and in relation to whom they must take a secondary, if not a very lowly, position. They are nevertheless wise, happy, and blessed as no other men are, thus to renounce the kingdom, because their delight is that the right to rule may be exercised by another instead of by themselves. Many would say at once that Jonathan was an absolute fool to take David, the son of Jesse, to his own confusion; to let David look forward to having the kingdom, while he, the son of the king, was to be cast out from the seat of authority and was to become a subject to the shepherd boy. Who can say that such was the course of wisdom? And yet they who have been initiated into God's truth are bold to declare that the only position of blessing, of peace, of power, and of true prosperity for the man who, like Jonathan, appears to be heir to an earthly kingdom is for him to give up his own position to another whom the Lord hath appointed to be king; our happiness and peace and blessing come in taking the Lord's will instead of our own.

In the story of David and Jonathan we have a very simple picture of devotion,* and one which it is essential to understand in order to know the means of obtaining true spiritual power. What we may call the manward aspect of the gospel deals with the spiritual purposes of God for his children in Christ Jesus our Lord. This enables us to preach perfection, though no human perfection; the perfect Christ and not the perfect sinner. By the mercy of God there is in Christ Jesus everything that human nature can need or wish for its benefit; and these wonderful blessings are not only for eternal life, but for the life that now is, so that a man enjoys in the mortal

* Here, as elsewhere in the Old Testament, we are to remember that the picture does not in any way represent the life beyond the grave, but is intended by God to instruct man in regard to the present life.

flesh just so much as he can take of Jesus Christ the perfect Saviour.

There is, however, another side to the gospel, namely, the Godward aspect. The manward aspect of the gospel is God to man; the Godward aspect is man to God in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom alone we can know the Father in this life. How, then, shall we make use of our Godward privilege except by our devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ? We can never be what God would have us be unless we accept our one privilege as men. Other creatures serve God by instinct or by necessity; men serve him by choice, from love and gratitude because of Christ's work. "We love him because he first loved us." God is love, and if we do not love then there is none of God in us. Men never go to hell simply because they commit adultery or theft or murder. God's Son wiped out with his precious blood the guilt of the sins committed against the Holy One; but there is one sin that even God himself can never purge or pardon, and that is the refusal of the cold heart to love. If you die without love you are damned forevermore. I would gladly abstain from speaking of hell, but my Master never did, and his apostles never did; there is an awful truth in our Lord's own words: "He that believeth not shall be damned." When a man believes he gives himself over absolutely to the Christ, to be whatever the Christ would have him be; so that you will not be eternally lost because you stole or cheated or killed, shameful and sinful as these things are before God; but the one great question before God is, Do I love him because he first loved me? And remember that God says that if we love him we must love our neighbor. Who is the nearest of all neighbors to me? There is One who is nearer to every child of God than mother, nearer than wife, and he is the Christ of God, who in his infinite love and power not only touches the heart, but comes into closest contact with the soul. You would be

ashamed to say that you have no love for your mother or wife ; then what shall be said of men and women who call themselves believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and yet have no true love to him? Do you claim to love your Saviour? Will you dare to have the searching light of God's holy truth applied to you by God the Holy Ghost? Then study the picture of true devotion which is here presented, and judge of the depth of your love as God shall speak to your soul.

David, as every one knows, is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. At the point at which we take up the history there had recently been in the presence of the camp of Israel that noted giant of heathendom, Goliath of Gath. Israel's camp lay on one hill-side, and the Philistines' on another opposite to it ; between the two there was a great sweeping valley, into which strutted daily Goliath of Gath, preceded by his armor-bearer, and there he taunted the children of Israel with the boast that no one in the whole camp of Israel was able to come out and fight against him ; and he spoke the truth, until that stripling David came from tending his father's flocks to bring his father's greetings to his brothers who were in the army. When David was told who this Goliath of Gath was he quietly said, " Is it so? is there no one in the camp of the Lord able to fight against him? " He then offers himself for the battle, and passes down into the valley to meet the giant, having in his hand one of those five stones that were taken from the brook. In another moment, by the power of God directing that stone, the giant lies prostrate and at the mercy of his enemies. His head is severed from his body with his own sword, and David passes back toward the camp of Israel, not only a conqueror, but bearing the trophies of his victory in the presence of the two hosts, both of enemies and of friends.

This is a striking illustration of the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ when he, on our behalf, had vanquished Satan, the great Goliath of hell. David is passing back toward the

host of his friends with the head of the giant in one hand and his sword in the other. Imagine the impression which this sight made upon the two hosts. In the minds of the ancients the scene was reproduced in the case of the Lord Jesus by the supposed effect in the camp of hell after his conquest of death. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead they arose and fled; and in the apocryphal gospel there is one of the most striking pictures concerning our Lord's death that can well be imagined as coming from an uninspired writer. It is there said that on the night of our Lord's death messengers hastened from earth to hell, and as Beelzebub sat upon his throne one after another entered and shouted, "Tidings, my lord Beelzebub—tidings from earth to hell." "What tidings?" "That Jesus Christ has laid his head upon his breast and has died, having commended his spirit unto the Father; he is conqueror, and is now coming among the dead to carry back his trophies immediately." At once Beelzebub tauntingly replies, "What means this? I fear not." But at that moment David and several of his compeers took up their harps and began to sing, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." Back from the throne of Satan comes the taunting cry of Beelzebub, "Who is this King of glory?" Again the songsters raise their voices and shout, "The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory; the Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." Then Satan trembles and bows his head in fear, and Jesus' triumph begins.

Thus the Philistines flee from their camp in terror, exactly as the hosts of hell were cowed with fear when they heard that Jesus had vanquished Satan; but we need not mention them except to say that they represent God's enemies, who would tremble and flee if they learned that Jesus was coming with the adversary's head in one hand and the sword of justice in the other. It is an awful thing to be impelled to flee from

David's greater Son when he comes as conqueror and judge, and to be among those who call upon the rocks and the hills to cover them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb, and from him who shall sit upon the throne. God help you if you are among those enemies.

But now let us turn from the enemy to consider David passing from the valley back to the camp of Israel on the brow of the hill. As he returns he sees the great concourse of people flocking from the upland, rushing hastily down into the valley. They too have seen the fall of their foe, they have seen the Philistines fleeing in despair, and they are hurrying down—what for? To secure what spoils they can from the camp of the enemy. As they pass the son of Jesse, David, our Jesus, what say they? Is there any word of gratitude for his love in taking his life in his hand for their sakes? Not one word of gratitude comes from the whole camp of Israel to that blessed victor who has gained salvation on their behalf. They only hurry forward to seize upon the spoils, to secure money, trophies, armor, brass, all things connected with the body; but not a thought for the savior of their lives. Think of the multitudes who call themselves Israel, God's chosen people, who sit in the camp of Israel and profess to bear armor as soldiers of the Lord, who only say, "There goes the Son of Jesse taking his life in his hand for our sakes. Watch him, the wonderful Victor, go to the cross; look at him—splendid picture!" A sentimental fool says, "I love to see a beautiful picture by Rubens or one of the old masters depicting the agony of Christ upon the cross of Calvary; I love to see the blood-drops flow; I love to look at the crown of thorns, and to see the anguish of his face." Do you? Do you? You will have to answer for every throb of pleasure which you experience in seeing the picture of your dying Saviour covered with pain and shame and spittle and blood, while yet you pass him by without one thought of love, without one emotion of real de-

votion to your Redeemer. Brethren, it is an awful thing to watch the Son of God go down into the valley of humiliation and gain a victory on our behalf, and then to rush by him after the spoils of earth from the camp of the enemy. There are multitudes who are eager enough to get the spoils of Christ's victory, not counting that as earthly ambition, but who never love and serve the Victor. Jesus never asks you simply to take the benefits of his salvation; he only asks you whether you will love him, whether you will give yourself to him. What a cowardly religion it is, to be afraid to oppose the foe until Christ has vanquished him, and then to rush over the corpse and kick it and take all the good results that we can from what Jesus has done, but never to give a thought to him who gained the victory at the cost of his life !

But there are others in this picture besides the careless and thoughtless aspirants after blessing to themselves; there is the man who is seated at his tent door, Saul, the son of Kish. As David goes to meet the foe Saul turns to Abner, the captain of the host, and says, "Abner, whose son is this youth?" Ancient writers have long taken Saul to be a type of the learned Pharisee of the days of Christ; but he seems to me to be not only a picture of the Pharisee, proud of his self-righteousness, proud of his works, proud of his stature, and proud of his speech, as in the days of Jesus Christ, but Saul, the son of Kish, sitting in his tent door, exactly represents any man who imagines that he can hold the fort by his own prowess and strength, in his own armor, and to his own glory, and who forgets to submit to the Lord of hosts and to be obedient to his will. Saul is the man who had despised the will of God when he was commanded to slay the Amalekites; he had chosen the best of the spoils for himself and for his people, and had spared Agag, the king of Amalek; so that though once among the prophets and having the Spirit of the Lord upon him, he has now for some time been troubled with an evil spirit from

God, which had brought him into all kinds of distress and trouble. This man sits in his tent door as David, our Jesus, goes out to fight on his behalf, and he puts the proud and haughty question, "Abner, whose son is this youth?" In the days of our Lord on earth the Pharisees apparently asked the same question, for Jesus himself says, "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" And they refused to answer correctly, because they knew that if they told the truth they would have to confess their base ingratitude and their pride.

For a considerable time David had actually sat in Saul's home playing away the evil spirit from God by his lovely music, and yet a few days later Saul has apparently forgotten the benefits that he has received from David. He has offered his armor when the youth would go against the giant; he is willing to cover him with a coat of mail such as he himself is proud of, but he has no care for him who has brought peace to his soul when the evil spirit from God was upon him; and now Saul has the impudence to inquire, "Whose son is this youth?" This, my brethren, is the question to-day from all the brazen-armored men who are trying to captivate the young people and to make them bow to them as kings; they are inquiring as warriors of wisdom and pride in this world, "Whose son is Jesus?" It is a question of base ingratitude, when they have received such wonderful benefits at his hand. Are you clothed in the pride of your heart with brazen armor of men's manufacture, ever ready to fight if it will bring you glory, but full of fear when you see the giant of hell? I never yet knew a brazen Saul who did not desire to flee from the devil when the fear of death was upon him. You who have received such boundless mercies from Jesus, you on whom he has bestowed such love, is it not the height of baseness and ingratitude for you to sit calmly in your homes with the Bible in your hand and say, "I wonder whose son this Jesus of Nazareth is. Come, let us have an argument." Is that becoming in one

who has had an evil spirit charmed away by the music of his love even before he slew your old enemy and vanquished death for you? But you will add still more to your baseness if you decline to bow before this Jesus and own him as Lord of all.

In the picture before us, besides the careless Israel who want to be saved, but never care a straw for the Saviour, there are three classes of men represented. Saul is the type of the self-righteous man who sits calmly before God and man and flatters himself that all is well, because he is clothed in his own armor and has never done wrong in his own eyes. What is the end of such a man? Toward the close of his life Saul has to fight these Philistines again, and because of fear he leaves his own camp and goes to consult the witch of Endor, one of the very people whom he had proudly ordered to be killed as impostors. Have you never observed that a self-righteous man who flatters himself that he is capable of meeting every difficulty in this world always swings from the extreme of pride to the extreme of terror when he comes face to face with death? Thus on the night before his death Saul is groveling on the ground in a witch's cave, and there rises before his vision Samuel, who had been his bane, but would have been his blessing, and Samuel tells him from God that he must die the next day. Saul's extremity of anguish is so great that he cannot be persuaded to take a mouthful to eat. God pity the man who knows the day before his death any horror such as Saul, the king of Israel, knew. What is the end of such a man? On the hill Gilboa, where the battle is fought, Saul has fallen wounded; and as he lies there a stranger comes up. (I pray God, whatever your future in eternity may be, that he will save you from such a death as that of King Saul.) A stranger stands before Saul, and he, in the extremity of his anguish, says, "Slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me." Who is this stranger? "I am an Amalekite." "What, an Amalekite! I ought to have killed the Amalekites,

and now an Amalekite must kill me." * If you do not slay the enemies that God has commanded you to slay they will rise up before you in your dying hour and will cause you anguish by bringing up your shame before you. For God's sake get rid of your armor of brass and bow down upon your face before your David, saying, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

If Saul is the type of the self-righteous man, what think you of Abner, the captain of the host? When Saul says, "Abner, whose son is this youth?" Abner puts on the cynical sneer of the agnostic and says, "As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell." No, your agnostic never can tell; he is always claiming to be the cleverest man in the camp, and as leader of the king's host it is his duty to know who the youth is who has wrought this wonderful victory. And yet Abner flatters himself that it is sufficient for him, the leader of the host, to say, "As thy soul liveth, I cannot tell." The agnostic is always ready to talk about the soul, quite willing to talk about God, and claims superior wisdom; but he thinks it will suffice, when a puzzling question is put, to reply, "Ah, my young friend, that is one of those things that no one knows." He brings you to the Bible and says that we cannot tell anything about this David. "I would advise you to take the attitude of a philosopher," he says to the young man or the young woman who questions him; he tells them that it is very wonderful to doubt, according to the philosophical idea of ignorance, and that to affect ignorance is to show superior knowledge. He thinks that such an attitude is very grand. But now look for a moment at Abner's end, an illustration of the end of every agnostic. Abner is one who is always trying to hedge; therefore when Saul is dead Abner tries Ishbosheth; when he does

* It is not clear that the Amalekite really slew Saul, although he boasted that he had done so, in hope of a reward from David. (See 1 Sam. xxxi. 3-5 and 2 Sam. i. 6-10.)—D. L. P.

not suit he turns to David to see if he cannot claim some benefits from him. What is his end? Joab, the son of Zeruiah, takes his sword and runs him through like a traitor. Then, as Abner lies there dead, King David stands at the head of the bier, and notwithstanding his wish to speak well of the man, he cannot say more than this: "Died Abner as a fool dieth?" Yes, always dies the agnostic as a fool dieth. God save us from the fate of the agnostic.

Now look at David. As he came back into the camp of Israel the people neglected him, Saul forgot him, Abner ignored him, all neglected him but one man. As David arose from speaking with Saul, "the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." It was not the victory only that charmed him, glorious as that was; it was simply that the young man David, so kingly, so humble, so beautiful, took right hold of the soul of Jonathan, and Jonathan gave out all his heart to him. Saul had loved David once; * the Pharisees may have loved Jesus for a moment; you may have been excited by some feeling to love the Lord Jesus for a little while, but will you test that love and see whether it is like Saul's or like Jonathan's?

What are the proofs of Jonathan's love? First (1 Sam. xviii. 3), "Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul." Have you ever gone aside with the Lord Jesus and put your hand into the conqueror's hand and said, "My Lord, thou beloved Son of Jesse, thou mighty Counselor, I love thee, and desire to make a covenant with thee"? The gospel of our salvation calls for personal dealing with Jesus, and if you do not begin by making a covenant with him who conquered all for you, your religion is of little value. We are separated from God by sin, and Christ comes to bind our hearts back to God, and therefore we should begin by making a covenant of love with him.

* 1 Sam. xvi. 21.

Then, because he loved him, "Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." You may have made your covenant of consecration, but have you stripped yourself and given to Jesus the filthy rags of your own righteousness? He will take them. There is a most remarkable expression here; we read, "even to his sword." Did you ever see the force of that? We are told (1 Sam. xiii. 22) that, owing to the oppression of the Philistines, there were only two swords in all Israel; one was Saul's and one was Jonathan's. David has now come back with the sword of Goliath in his hands; therefore he has another sword, and a mighty sword at that. But Jonathan loves David so intensely that he cares not that there are no other swords in the camp of Israel, and that David already has one, but he says, "O David, take all, take all; take my sword; you have one, but never mind; take another; take all." True love stops not to think how much must be given and what can be kept; it gives all. Give up your sword, your fighting power; let Jesus take it; he does not need it, perhaps, but he loves to receive it because it is a token of your love to him. What is your sword? Is it your money? Will you give it up to him? Your voice? Give it up. Do not begin to mince matters. You must strip yourself and give all your possessions and powers to him.

But that is not all. We read (1 Sam. xix. 2) that "Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David." He told David everything that was plotted against him; he had quiet talks with him over the wickedness of the home life, because he delighted in David. Quiet talks with Jesus about his enemies will be very helpful to your soul and will bring you nearer him.

But still further we read (1 Sam. xx. 4), "Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee." "Oh," you say, "that is going one step too far. I made a covenant with Him long ago. I have even

stripped myself of all my most cherished powers and possessions; but if I say that I will do whatever He wants, there is no saying to what I shall commit myself; I might be made a fool of before friends or employers, so that even my only means of obtaining a living for my wife and children may be taken away." But Love puts his hand up to Him who is to be the king and trustingly and devotedly says, "Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee." Do you meet this test of your love?

But again, we are told (1 Sam. xx. 17) that "Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul." The Holy Ghost seems to labor to express this fact of the depth of his love in a way that has no parallel elsewhere in the Bible. Now Jonathan makes David swear to him; he calmly says to David, "I know that thou art to be the king in my stead; I know that the whole authority is to be thine, and that my family may be left at thy disposal; but, David, when I am gone and my children are left to thy mercy, thou wilt be gracious to my family, wilt thou not?" We poor wretched fools of men are always planning to look after our families and fancying that we must make provision for wife and children when the Lord takes us away. What a beautiful rebuke Jonathan gives us when he says, "You will be here long after I am gone; take my family and care for them for me"! So David and Jonathan swore to each other, because each loved the other as his own soul. When shall we learn what a blessed thing it is to leave everything to King Jesus, for he will manage the family better than we could? The anxious mother says, "O my darlings, what will become of them?" Make David swear. He will do it when he sees that you love him as you love your own soul.

Once more (1 Sam. xx. 25-34), King Saul is described as sitting at his feast; David is absent, and Jonathan is called upon

to answer for him. When once a man becomes identified with the Son of David all look at him and say, "There is the fellow who loves Jesus; let him answer. Come, Jonathan, what have you to say?" Jonathan always has much to say, even though King Saul, his father, hurls a javelin at his head and says, "Thou son of the perverse rebellion, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion?" "Quite true, father; I never expected to be king since David came; he is to be king, but that does not trouble me." Then comes the javelin—"You fool, to give up the kingdom to the son of Jesse!" But, my brother, that is just what we were saved to do. We are saved that Jesus may be King.

Now notice the last interview between Jonathan and David (1 Sam. xxiii. 16, 17): "Jonathan, Saul's son, arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth." That is the most beautiful act of self-abnegation that could be performed by mortal man. Jonathan puts the kingdom directly into David's hands and says, "I shall be next unto thee." It may be said that Jonathan never really sat next to David on the throne; but whatever was the fulfilment of his expectation, it is certainly true in our case, if we give up the first place to the Son of David, that we shall have blessing even in this life, and in the world to come we shall enjoy our position of power eternally.

Come now to the death-scene of Jonathan. Now he is next to King David, when at the head of that solemn funeral procession, though the bodies have not yet been recovered from the Philistines' place of burial, there stands one who is now truly called King David. As he stands at the head of the procession there breaks from his heart the touching cry, "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast

thou been unto me : thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." That is the burial sermon, that is the funeral oration which King David utters over his friend, who had given up the throne out of love to his savior, and had gladly let him have his rights because God had anointed him. My brethren, God has anointed Jesus to be King ; you and I are dying men ; tell me, could there be in this world a greater reward for devotion than this ? If I am to die before Thou comest, O blessed King, O glorious Lord, O mighty David, —thou hast thy rights and thou wilt be universally acknowledged one day—come as King of all, and stand, I pray thee, at my bier's head and say, "I am distressed for thee, my beloved brother : thy love to me was wonderful." That would be a ten million times greater reward than all the wealth, all the power, all the pleasures that earth can give. Men and brethren, the King died for you, he lives with God eternally, he will one day come to take his throne. I beseech you, give him his rights now out of love and gratitude, so that if you die before he appears, he who wept at Lazarus's grave may stand by your bier's head and say, "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan : very pleasant hast thou been unto me : thy love to me—not to my kingdom, not to my home, not to my wealth—thy love to *me* was wonderful." Bless the women who are able to love so that David, in speaking of the true love of unselfish devotion, must compare it to woman's love—but it surpasses that, and is very wonderful. Christ's own name was Wonderful. He has given only two wonderfals in the world—himself and the love of his loving one. O brethren, be wonderful along with Christ, and he will say to you, as I trust he will say to me, "Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."

SEPARATION AND SATISFACTION:

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF RUTH

“Then Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? . . . Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day. . . . So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife.”—RUTH III. 1, 18; IV. 13.

A CERTAIN man, entitled Elimelech, a native of Bethlehem, Judah, in the time of famine leaves his own paternal residence, where he ought to have remained with God, and passes down into the dangerous country of Moab, where he tarries with his wife and two sons. The sons become allied to two women of Moab, Ruth and Orpah. The father, Elimelech, and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, die there, and at last Naomi awakes to the fact that she is not blessed among the outcast people of Moab, but that she should be back in the house of her fathers. One of her daughters-in-law goes with her, but the other remains behind. Naomi arrives in Bethlehem, the blessed city of Judah, and there becomes conscious of the fact that her husband's kinsman, Boaz, is able to make provision for her and for her daughter-in-law. It is through the guidance of Naomi that Ruth at last is united in wedlock to this Boaz, a man of great wealth, the kinsman of Elimelech.

Every name in this history is full of deep spiritual signifi-

cance, and it is impossible for any student of God's holy Word to study this remarkable story carefully without seeing that we may learn from them some mighty spiritual truths. Elimelech ("my God is King"), whose name recognizes God as his ruler, and his wife, Naomi (the "blessed" or "agreeable"), fail to realize the power of God to provide for his own in the time of difficulty and danger; so that they leave Bethlehem (the "house of bread"), where all God's people should be dwelling, and go forth, as so many parents do when they are wishing to provide for their families, into Moab—the world—in the hope that by human might and human wisdom they may be able to provide for their loved ones, since God, as they think, is either unwilling or unable to do it. Having arrived among the worldly children of Moab, who are the descendants of Lot and his daughters to their own shame, this Hebrew family tarries there for ten years, enjoying nothing whatever of spiritual comfort or progress. The father, Elimelech, dies, having to bear the consequences of having dishonored his King by placing himself in a worldly position. Mahlon ("weakness" or "infirmity") and Chilion (the "perfect" or "beautiful") both die because they have thus placed themselves in contact with the world, where the child of God has no proper place.

But after this, Naomi (the "pleasant" and "blessed"), who has thus become Mara ("bitter"), awakes to the fact that there ought to be a better life, that there can be, and seems to say that there shall be a better life for her, the child of God, than tarrying in the midst of worldly connections. In the present day conferences are held in all parts of the world in order that the church, which has made the mistake of Naomi, may be awakened to the conviction that impious connections are not a blessing, that impious sojournings bring nothing but pain, and therefore years pass by without fruit. No children are begotten of those marriages with the daughters of Moab. The children of God are learning to-day as never before that to be

allied with the people of the world, who are under the curse of God, can bring no blessing; but they are beginning to realize that God can take his children out of the world, if they have but faith to resign the world and to go back in trust to live among the people of the Lord. Thus Naomi, waking up to the conviction that she might have better things if she should go back to Bethlehem, now, under an impulse from God, says to her daughters-in-law, "The Lord has bidden me to go back to my home among the chosen people of the Lord, and to have no further contact with the world; and I must go." It is a noticeable fact that she makes no appeal to those women to go with her; she simply leaves them to decide for themselves. When God's call comes to you, you cannot force your daughters or your associates to leave the world at once and to give up all for the sake of the Lord, but it is your place, cost what it may, to obey the call of the Lord to his church, and to come out from among the world and be separate from them—not come out from your churches, not come out from God's people and claim to be peculiarly separate and more holy than others who belong to the Lord, not set yourselves up as a separate church until at last all the unity in the body of Christ is lost. Theodore Monod once said that he asked one man the question, "Are there many Christians in this city?" The man answered, "Well, sir, there is Brother Jones and myself, but I am not quite sure about Brother Jones." We want none of that sort of separation, that dignified isolation, which says, "I am separate; therefore I am holier than thou." Those words bring God's supreme curse upon any who dare to utter them. Such an attitude is not of the Lord. We must have love, we must have unity, we must have brotherly compassion and sympathy; the Naomis of the Lord are only called to go out *from the world*—from Moab, the places of spiritual peril where there is no true light from the Lord—and to go back among God's own people and cast their lot

with them, though at the cost of pain to themselves and their loved ones.

Naomi, having ascended the hill with Ruth and Orpah, looks out over the wild waste that stretches for a hundred miles toward Bethlehem; she turns her back on the valley of Moab, so pleasant to the eye, and says, "I leave you, my daughters; the Lord hath called me, I cannot tarry." If mothers will take that step God will bless them and their daughters more than they know. Now there comes the winnowing of the wheat from the chaff, the sifting of the heart. We are told that Orpah (whose name means "nakedness") looked back toward the fields of Moab, and although she kissed her mother-in-law and wept, she went back "unto her people, and unto her gods." We hear no more of the naked one; she has gone back to her nakedness. She has chosen to return to her father-in-law's money and property, her brother-in-law's position and home; she is an heiress, perhaps. Orpah is rich in the world, but she is poor in soul; and on the night of her death the Spirit of the Lord will say to such a one, now as then, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall these things be which thou hast been gathering together?" Beloved sisters and brethren, I beseech you, hear the voice of the Lord, and say not, like Orpah, "I must weep and go back, because I love the world and cling to it still;" but, like Ruth, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for where thou goest, I will go; where thou lodgest, I will lodge; where thou diest, I will die: thy people shall be my people, and thy God shall be my God: God do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

The Lord calls us to the holy life; he bids us come to his own "house of bread" in the land of liberty, of blessing, and of joy. Shall there not be a compact between God's children, that, though physically we may be separated, yet spiritually from this day forth till we meet at God's right hand we shall

be one in the blessed privilege of trusting ourselves wholly to the Lord? Ruth was only a heathen outcast by origin, one who must journey like a poor beggar a hundred miles across a dreary waste inhabited by thieving Bedouins; and yet we never hear a word of fear or complaint. Those two unprotected women traveled through a country infested by banditti and robbers, and there is never a word about fear or peril; all we read is: "And they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest." Blessed be God, the "house of bread" welcomes home at harvest-time the woman who has learned her lesson and the heathen-born outcast; they may come into the house of the Lord, and there he will make provision for all their wants.

The first step toward such a blessing is to make a decision. How many years have you been allied to the church of God as a church-member, and yet have not had a spiritual trial? How many years have you been linked on to the ministry, like Naomi, the pleasant one, a beautiful creature, one who loved the Lord, but, like her, without having any fruit, any results to show for your Christianity and service, because you have been cleaving to Moab? You should have been in Bethlehem, but you loved the world or were afraid of the journey. "Elimelech was my predecessor," says the minister; "he was a man whom every one used to point out as one whose King was God; he was a lovely minister, but he brought the congregation down until they were living among the Moabites, and I cannot bring them back." Perhaps you cannot, but now the call of the Lord comes to you to go back to the "house of bread," cost what it may, and the Lord himself makes it a testing and a sifting time. Half of your congregation may live on in the world and abandon you, but the other half will go with you and become Ruths ("satisfied"). Bethlehem is the land of satisfaction and rest and fullness of blessing for them that trust in the Lord.

The second chapter of this history relates how, from the moment of their entrance into God's land of promised blessing, the time of peace and comfort begins. But Naomi—the church or the minister—has not yet fully waked up to all that God intends to give them, and all that she can say is, "There is a kinsman of ours, a man of mighty wealth, one of the chief men in Bethlehem. This is the time of barley harvest; go, my daughter, and glean in his field."* Ruth enters the field of Boaz (whose name signifies "in him is strength"†), and her kinsman observes her immediately and says, "Who is that?" A servant replies, "She is Ruth the Moabitess, the daughter-in-law of Naomi." Boaz then goes up to her and says, "My daughter, glean nowhere else; keep fast by my maidens"—a grand exhortation to the young Christian; but that is not all—"and whenever you want food, take all you wish from the young men's provision." Even that is not enough. Boaz goes to the young men and says, "Let drop plenty for her, as much as ever she can carry." Our Boaz is a glorious man, a man of mighty wealth and love, and when he sees a stranger who has given her heart to the people of the Lord he will give her all that she can take; he will overload her with benefits. He says also, "The Lord recompense thy work, and a full re-

* Five and twenty years ago, when I first preached upon the Book of Ruth, I remember that I pointed my people to the fact that people must make the decision and come out from the world; then I carried them on into the future and told them that they might go and glean, and that they would find plenty to supply all their need; but that was all I could say then. Blessed be God, I now know something better even than that; but the gleaning comes first.

† In 1 Kings vii. 21 we learn that there were two pillars to the temple, Jachin ("he shall establish") and Boaz ("in him [or in it] is strength"). So St. Peter says (1 Pet. v. 10): "The Lord stablish, strengthen, and settle you, that ye may be able to bring forth fruit." God wants us to be Jachinized and Boazized; he wants us to come into the true church, and then he will stablish and strengthen and settle us.

ward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." He fills her apron, her cloak—everything that she can carry; but she has nothing more than she can take.

But gleaning, after all, is a poor trade; it is hard work, with comparatively little result; it is only a day-by-day supply, with much toil. So many Christians have never been taught by their ministers and leaders anything better than is in the second chapter of Ruth. They go into the field and labor hard and take home as much as they can carry, and the Lord Jesus Christ is very generous; but that never makes a home or makes full provision. There is something better than that to be had.

The third chapter tells us that Naomi awakes at last, and she says, "My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?" I well remember when I first saw that text in its fullness and realized that I had been keeping my people upon the evangelical doctrines of salvation—coming into the "house of bread," and being saved from the world—and had been giving them plenty of gleaning to do, but was always urging them forward into the field of work, saying, "Go and work; be at it." Many of us are always pushing the young workers out like that, and are getting them so weary! They come home from their Sunday-school saying, "It is a great weariness, mother; but I will do it for your sake. I am very tired, the heat is so great, and you see I have not brought home much. The good Man gave me as much as I could carry, but I did not really earn it; only his bounty gave me this." Now Naomi wakes up and says, "My daughter, there is something better to be had than this gleaning; shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?" Boaz has gathered most of his harvest into his barn, and is about to celebrate his harvest feast. Naomi says, "My daughter, wash thee [in the Word of God], put on thy best clothes [the beautiful garments of Zion], go down to his feast,

and when he has finished you lie down at his feet and say nothing. You need not speak, only put yourself at his disposal and see what he will do." It is a grand moment, beloved, when the child of God is brought to the feet of Jesus with a literal abandonment of himself to the tender mercy of the Lord. Go and throw yourself down at the feet of Jesus, and cover yourself with his robe; your own robe is not enough, even though it is beautifully wrought; put his robe over you and wait. Then, when he sees you there, say, like Ruth, "Do to me the work of a kinsman"—a redeemer. He will reply, "My daughter, with the morning light I will be at the work for you." Ruth goes home, and the mother says, "Now, my daughter, sit still; I am seeking rest for thee, but the man himself will not rest until he has carried out the work on thy behalf."

Now the fourth chapter shows us the blessed life of abundance and fruitfulness. The morning light comes, and this man Boaz, the mighty man, the kinsman, the redeemer for those who have come to trust him, is seen sitting in the gate. He says to one passing, "Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here." Who is this man? He also is a kinsman, and represents the law, which has the first legal right over the inheritance of Elimelech. He has a right to take it for his own; and Boaz asks, "Will you take it?" The law is always very ready to press its claims, and replies, "Of course I will take it; I will take as much as ever I can get." But now this blessed redeemer says, "If you take the land you must also take the poor outcast woman to be your wife." "No, no," replies the law, "I know nothing of marriage between me and a sinner." You may labor hard under the law, and the law may claim its riches, but it will never take the sinner into its home, into its business, into its prosperity, and to bring about fruitfulness; the law knows nothing about raising up seed. But the redeemer, blessed Boaz, in whom is strength, says,

“If you do not take the woman with the land, you can claim nothing; and I will take the woman, the outcast Moabitess, the very offspring of evil, to my home, and she shall be proclaimed to be my wife before all the world.” So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife.

Some are struggling in the dark to-day like poor Ruth; they are down at Jesus' feet, but they can see nothing. But the morning light has come, and reveals the One in whom there is strength; he stands there and says, “Who will take this poor helpless outcast, the representative of sin, the very embodiment of evil in the eyes of the Lord's people?” Although the law puts in a claim at first, the law will not redeem the sinner; and so the Lord Jesus Christ, who was born in Bethlehem to be our kinsman—our Redeemer—claims the rights and performs the work of a redeemer. He will take any poor outcast such as you and will turn you into a Ruth—one who is literally *satisfied*.

Now the life of the redeemed one becomes changed; it is no longer the old Moab life of sin and worldliness, with no fruit; it is no longer the struggling life of the gleaner, who labors day after day and gets, like the Israelites in the wilderness, just as much as one can gather. Many try to satisfy themselves with that; they glean hard, and then seek to slake their thirst by a momentary draft from the vessels of the young men; but there is no Ruth-life in such a supply. You may go to great preachers or noted teachers day after day, but what you take from them will never satisfy you, for they are, after all, but servants of the great Man of Bethlehem. You must go to the great Boaz himself, and he will take you into his house. It is not the act of consecration at his feet that brings the desired blessing. That is very important; you must wash, anoint, and cover yourself with his robes of righteousness, and lie down at his feet; but that is not enough. Boaz himself must now do the acting. It was not Ruth who took

Boaz, but Boaz who took Ruth; and if we take Ruth's position, the Lord Jesus will take us into his home. He takes us to provide for us, to comfort us, to bless us, to satisfy us, to protect us, to do us honor, and to keep our names bright and beautiful before the world. Our Boaz says, "Come, come into my home, and I will be keeper, friend, Saviour, Lord, Master, husband, provider; you shall have all you want, for all things are yours." My wife does not speak of Mr. Peploe's money—she speaks of our money; she does not speak of Mr. Peploe's home and children—she speaks of our home, our children. Brethren, a true Ruth, when she goes into the house of a true Boaz, has all that he has, for he is hers, and in him she has everything that is owned by him. Then the woman comes to be a faithful, obedient, affectionate wife. But how would Boaz have felt if he had seen Ruth going out again to glean in the fields like a common, laboring, outcast woman? Would he not have been distressed? When you, my brothers and sisters, spend your lives in scraping together a few ears of corn by hard toil—it may be for money, it may be for ambition or pleasure, or it may be for spiritual provision by hard labor—laboring with anxiety and yet never accomplishing anything, perpetually seeking after the meager provisions of the young men and never getting any real satisfaction, because the sun is too hot; while you are gleaning to make it restful and peaceful, do you not think that our Boaz, our mighty Man of wealth, is grieved to his very soul? Ruth is the wife of Boaz, and should be at home and dispense the bounty of the great man, her redeemer, her husband.

I remember hearing of one woman who, being poor herself, was married to a wealthy man. He put ten thousand dollars into the bank for her to spend yearly for herself, and at the end of the year he said to her, "We must settle up the banker's book. Would you like some more put in?" She replied, "No, I have only spent a hundred." "Why did you not spend it

all? I have plenty more whenever you want it." "Well," she said, "I thought it was not right to spend so much, because I am poor." "But I am rich." "But," she answered, "I thought that there might come a day of need, and so I had better keep it." That grieved the husband much. He said, "Beloved, I meant you to spend it; I have more than you will ever need. Take it and use it and give it away; I meant you to give it." Ruth was meant by Boaz to be giving, giving, giving. Suppose that a poor Moabiteess had come up to the door and asked for a crumb of bread, and Ruth had said, "I cannot afford to give you any." Would not Boaz have been ashamed of his wife? And is not the Lord Jesus ashamed of us when he sees that we are so shabby and give so little?

I recently heard of two ladies who were comparatively poor, but who were thought to be lovely Christians, and who gave liberally to all the church charities. One day the rector of their church learned that they had come into a large fortune, and he thought that of course their subscriptions would be doubled or quadrupled. But at the end of the year, when the subscriptions came in, there was not a farthing from either of them. He asked the man who had been soliciting, "Have you been to the Misses ——?" "Yes." "What did they say?" "They said they could not give anything." "They have not left the church?" "No." The rector called on them and said, "I congratulate you on the fortune that has come to you." "Yes," they said, "we have had a great deal." "Have you left the church?" "Dear, no." "But I do not see your names on any of the subscriptions this year; may I ask the reason?" "Well," they said, "when we were poor our money was not worth taking care of; but now that the Lord has sent us so much, it is our duty to be very careful of it and keep it safely."

The Lord calls each one of us to a position where we may have abundance and satisfaction. Let it be known that you

are indeed the grand lady of Bethlehem, and go dispensing God's bounty everywhere in gratitude and humility, in love and devotion; then your fruitfulness will begin. A son is born who is the grandfather of King David, and Ruth thus becomes the true and lawful ancestress of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You must make a choice. Stand upon the hill of decision. Eastward is Moab, with its rich plains, such as Lot saw stretch toward Sodom; westward, far away—it looks like a very perilous journey—lies Bethlehem, the “house of bread.” The Lord can bring you safely and provide for you. Make the decision, and he will call you, not to continue gleaning, but to lie at Boaz' feet; look up into his face and say, “My Redeemer.” You will learn that “in him is strength,” and you will come out so satisfied that you will never know what it is to be fretted, troubled, or fearful again, but you will rest in the Lord.

THE REST OF GOD

“ I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. . . . And to whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. . . . For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. [When God finished his work of creation, rest was to have begun for God and his creatures.] For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day, after so long a time; as it is said, To-day [never to-morrow; God limits his blessings only by saying Now!] if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus [Joshua] had given them [Israel] rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest [a Sabbath] to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest [God’s rest], he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labor therefore [the only labor we have*] to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”—HEBREWS III. 10, 11, 18, 19; IV. 3–11.

TAKE this short paraphrase of the entire passage in this Epistle to the Hebrews which treats of REST, as the key-thought of the whole of God’s Word. “ God is one,” says St. Paul (Gal. iii. 20); if, then, there is an absolute unity in the being

* Works are not labor. The only labor that we have now is to enter into something glorious and eternal. (Cf. Rev. xiv. 13 and Eph. ii. 10.)

and attributes of God, there must be a unity of purpose and a unity of operation in his works and in all of his revelations to man. We know that there is scientifically an absolute unity in the works of creation, called into existence by God's spoken word. There is also an absolute unity in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, which dwelt among us. He is the embodiment of God's creative power, for all things were created by him and for him, in him and to his glory. There must also be an absolute unity in the written Word, though it was spoken "at sundry times and in divers manners." There is thus an absolute unity in all the revelations of God, although in our ignorance and folly and feebleness we may not be able always to discover it.

Now if this be true with regard to the written Word as well as with regard to the creative word and the embodied Word, we are justified in searching God's holy Book to discover the one great thought, one great design, which runs through it, and we shall never fully understand these revelations of God until we see the unity of purpose through the whole. To discover this we must "search the Scriptures," as our blessed Lord says; we must "dig deep" into the very depths of the Scriptures, "for in them ye think [and think rightly] ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." Every scripture brings men to Christ; every true preacher brings men to Christ; everything in this earth is to bring men to Christ and from Christ to God. If, then, the purpose of God's revelation is wrapped up in Christ, the question arises, What is it in Christ that we are intended to discover in order that we may be fully blessed and become a blessing to those round about us? My answer is that from close study of God's Word I am led to believe that this particular passage in Hebrews sums up **all** the purpose of God in creation and in his subsequent revelation through his prophets and in his Son. This purpose is that man, and with man all creation around him, should enter

into THE REST OF GOD. No other solution of the question has ever satisfied my soul or served to unlock the holy Book. If this be true we shall discover in this revealed Word, we shall discover in the world, and we shall discover in Christ one grand truth, namely, rest, and that rest the rest of God.

We notice that the very moment when creation was finished (Heb. iv. 4; Gen. ii. 2) the great God, Elohim, who called creation into existence, is said to have "entered into rest." The first event in the history of the universe that God has been pleased to reveal to the sons of men is that as soon as his word had operated to call creation into existence, then he rested from all his works of creation. There was no labor to God, for labor is the result of sin, and labor will cease when sin has ceased. Works will never cease, because they are godlike; God worketh hitherto, and will continue to work throughout eternity.

Now if the design of God in these revelations is to bring men into "his rest," it behooves us to inquire carefully what are the characteristics of the rest of God. Is it a cessation from work? No; the Lord Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." It is not, therefore, rest in the sense of inaction. Is it sleep? Harken to the prophet Elijah as he mocks the prophets of Baal, saying, "Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." But, as says the psalmist, "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." It is only because of sin that we think of rest as mere inactivity or quiescence, and thus mistake the thought altogether. It would be a mistake, if not a sin, to speak of God as entering upon a condition of sleep or inaction.

The rest upon which God entered as soon as the works of creation were finished is explained to my mind by the words of the psalmist: "The Lord shall rejoice in all his works."*

* Ps. civ. 31.

Creation answered to the purpose of God's mind, satisfying him completely in all that he had intended; therefore God rested from the work of creation, because there was no need to create anything more. He was satisfied in what he saw his works doing, for we read that "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." That was rest. God was satisfied, and he watched his creation with delight. I suppose that the satisfaction of God may have been in the fulfilment of his heart's desire in seeing his work carrying out his great purpose of love, of beauty, and of holiness, all things answering to his creative mind.

We may perhaps dare to illustrate this by some work of what we call our own creation—an engine, a watch, or any other such mechanism which may be called into existence by the faculties with which God has endowed us. When a machine or engine answers to the inventor's mind in its construction and operation there is rest. There is not inaction; on the contrary, there is ceaseless activity; but there is the rest of satisfaction because the thing created answers to the purpose for which the creative mind called it into existence. This is the rest of God at the outset of the world's history, so far as I could dare attempt to define it, and so far as our knowledge goes.

The moment that the great work of creation is ended, man, the last of God's creative works, is called into the enjoyment of God's rest. There is perfect blessing for man; he has dominion over the works of God's hands, he has come into the rest of God, he has joy and peace, he delights in his wife and his wife in him; there is holy happiness in Eden because man has taken his proper place as the headstone of God's creation; God is satisfied and man is blessed. That is God's rest and man's enjoyment of it. But sin enters into the world and at once brings preëminently a condition of unrest. Henceforth there is no rest in any part of creation; man begins to toil and labor, eating bread in the sweat of his brow; woman must toil

and labor in the pain of childbirth. Everything on earth is in trouble and distress, not because man has fallen and God is scourging him, but because there is a severance between the creature and the Creator; this brings distress instead of peace, sorrow and suffering instead of bliss; all is henceforth unrest. But are the purposes of the divine Being to be thwarted because Satan has intruded himself into God's creation? Surely not. God will somehow carry out his mighty purpose of love; but how?

From the time when Adam fell, for six thousand years, God has been carrying out his purposes of love, mercy, grace, and wisdom to overthrow the action of Satan and to bring creation back into that blessed condition of rest which it formerly enjoyed; and he has been seeking by his grace so to establish his creatures in Christ Jesus that they shall never fall again. There lies the difference between us and Adam. Adam had the rest and the privilege of seeing and communing with God; but Adam fell because he was not so perfectly linked to God as to prevent the possibility of Satan injuring him. When our condition is finally completed there will be no possibility of our falling. Why? Because we will be so linked to God in Christ Jesus that, speaking divinely, not humanly, neither Satan nor any other power can drag us from that position. But how is such a condition to be brought about? If we rightly interpret the rich purposes of God in Christ we shall expect that wherever God sets about to thwart and overthrow the work of the devil and to bring about a final condition of bliss, there will appear the idea of rest. We shall expect to find this idea in some form in what we call the recreation or restoration or "restitution of all things." Look at the history of God's dealings with man and see if this is the case.

In the early history of man we meet with God's first great open attempt to bring about a restoration from the condition into which man had fallen. Adam's descendants sank deeper and deeper into sin, until at last God was compelled to bring

a flood of waters over the face of the earth and to overthrow the whole human race with eight exceptions—Noah and his wife and his three sons and their wives alone are spared. Is it not remarkable that Noah's name means "rest," and that, at the moment when God takes him into the ark and places him in the position of a saved one in the midst of the flood-tide that is bringing destruction on all the remainder of the human race, Noah rests with his family in perfect safety and peace—a position typical of the salvation of our souls in Christ Jesus? Moreover, the moment that the ark has finished its mission of saving men, and when God's flood is being removed from the earth, we read that the "ark rested." God's work was accomplished, and there was now rest and the beginning of a new creation. Noah and his family are brought from the ark and offer up their sacrifices to God. This is the first sacrifice in the restored world, and we read that "God smelled a sweet savor"—the Hebrew is, "God smelled a savor of rest;" and ever afterward throughout the Bible, when sacrifices to God are spoken of as a sweet savor, the Hebrew is "a savor of rest."* From the moment when God rescued Noah, the typical man of rest, from the place of destruction and put him into the restored earth, this one idea stands out prominently: that every sacrifice to God that is well pleasing in his eyes is a sacrifice in which there is a savor of rest.

* Numbers xxviii. 2 describes how God's people are beginning to offer sacrifices in the wilderness, and we read, "My sacrifices, . . . a sweet savor," or "My sacrifices, . . . a savor of rest." In Ezra vi. 10, where we read that the returning captives from Babylon are told to offer up sacrifices to God "of sweet savors," again it is in the margin, "sacrifices of savors of rest." It is the same in Ezekiel xvi. 19, 20, where God says, in reproaching his people for their sin, that they had taken his "savors of rest," and had offered them up to other gods; and in chapter xx. 41, where Ezekiel says that, when the people shall be restored to their land in the fullness of God's favor, then shall they offer unto him "sweet savors in sacrifices."

But this rest in Noah's day was only a physical, a natural rest; only the earth was here partially restored. Noah stepped out upon the material creation which God had deigned to bring to a partial restitution; but God's purposes show us that there is no rest to be had in the physical world. You may alter your surroundings, your character, your physical conduct, and your business, but there never will be rest in that, because it was no more the rest of God than was the ark resting upon Mount Ararat, and Noah resting in a new creation of the world. Thus we see that Noah immediately fell and became as much of a sinner as his forefathers. He is a witness to the fact that although a man may be entitled a man of rest, and may be given a material rest in a new physical condition, there is no rest for any man which is not linked to God.

God must therefore show another proof of his mighty power. Once again man sank deeper and deeper into sin, until the chosen race of Abraham became a set of slaves, and there was apparently no hope for man, for everything was in a condition of unrest and distress that is painful to contemplate. There was not a human being on earth, when Moses comes forward, who could be described as knowing what rest meant. But now suddenly God creates a new order of things in a night; as he had created a new family of men in Noah, so in the people of Israel he creates a new nation for himself. God lifts Israel out of their bitter bondage and the awful unrest of captivity and heathendom, and the very first thing that Pharaoh says to Moses (Exod. v. 5) is: "The people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens." How blessed that even the devil knows that God has sent his servants to make us rest! Then the first historical statement which we have recorded concerning Israel after they had left Egypt is the keeping of the Sabbath (Exod. xvi. 23). This is long before they came to Mount Sinai, where they received the tables

of the law.* From that time forward everything in Israel's history is typical; the people who were rescued from the land of Egypt were intended to be one grand exhibition of God's power upon material creation and upon ignorant men. Here we notice the difference between Noah and Israel. Noah, coming out of the ark, merely came into a material new creation; his was a physical deliverance and was also meant to be a moral, but was not a spiritual, deliverance. Israel never entered into the spiritual rest, alas! and therefore they fell into idolatry; but God, in separating them to himself, purposed to give them a model new creation, and took them up to Mount Sinai that they might see the moral mind and will of God. Alas! their stubborn hearts resented the divine purpose, and all that they could see in the Sabbath day was rest from toil. They ceased from their physical labors because God commanded it, but they saw no spiritual purpose in the Sabbath. The Ninety-fifth Psalm teaches us that God's purpose was not merely to take them out of Egypt, not merely to make them stop working one day in seven, not merely even to take them into the land of Canaan; for, as we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, if Jesus (Joshua) had given them true rest in Canaan, where they had entered physically, he would never have spoken of *another* day.

Israel went into Canaan, but did not enter the rest of God. All God's typical gifts to them failed to raise their moral tone, because they would not see that earthly things were all figures of the spiritual, and were intended to lead men to the spiritual. But no man can retain the Old Testament Scriptures without seeing that at every point God met them with this one idea,

* Those who taunt Christians with being no better than Jews because they observe the Sabbath day as a holy day might well remember that the observance started at creation and not at Sinai. Therefore it is no Jewish superstition at all, but it is an inherent fact that God's people, wherever they are, are in duty bound to keep a holy Sabbath.

that there must be a Sabbath of rest. In the twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus the land is ordered to have its Sabbath; in the thirtieth of Exodus and elsewhere the people are ordered to keep a Sabbath. In the prophets again and again the people and the land are enjoined always to observe a Sabbath. The meaning of this evidently was that as Israel's history was typical of the spiritual life, the people should have understood that a merely physical rest upon the seventh day was only a type of something better, and that even Canaan, the land of rest, the land of privilege, the land of possession, even the entrance into Canaan, was not enough to give them experience in the rest of God. If you take possession of the gifts of God and expect to find that they will make you rest, you will find that you are mistaken. The people of Israel never gave their hearts to God, they never saw the purpose of God, and so throughout the prophets we find the one grand idea that God is yearning to bring his people not only out of Egypt and through the wilderness into Canaan, but into the rest of God, which is perfect satisfaction in the finished work, and the enjoyment of that work in activity, peace, and power.*

Noah was meant to enter into the rest of God when he was delivered from the ark. He was to see God's hand in the new creation, and was to take it and to use it joyfully. He fell through abusing the works of God, and lost rest through sin. The Israelites were meant to see that God's deliverance was a perfect physical and a perfect moral deliverance, that they were delivered from Egypt physically that they might be saved from

* Jeremiah, in the sixteenth verse of the sixth chapter, says that if the people would only go back to the old ways and see the paths of God, they should find rest for their souls. The Lord Jesus is quoting that very passage from Jeremiah when he says (Matt. xi. 28), "I will give you rest." The prophet Zephaniah says that God will rest in his love. Isaiah says that his rest shall be glorious when he has finished his mighty work.

the burdens of the taskmasters, but that they were also saved through the blood of the Lamb from the wrath of God. They could not enter into God's rest because of unbelief. They entered Canaan, but that was not rest. The rest which they should have entered was the perfect satisfaction to the mind of God, the carrying out of God's purposes by the indwelling influence and power of God himself. Israel fell, and for fifteen hundred years we have one great lamentation of the mighty God that his chosen people would not enter into his holy rest. Israel the blessed, Israel the privileged, Israel the honored, Israel the chosen, like the Americans and English to-day, failed to enter into the rest of God because they never would learn spiritual truths from typical facts and through the typical attain unto the spiritual.

Physical and moral deliverance both failed because man's heart had not been regenerated. Now notice the third stage in God's endeavor to bring mankind into his rest. From the time of Adam's fall God never again intervened with a physical deliverance except in the creation of Noah, and in the new creation, Israel; but again he discloses his one great purpose in the person of Jesus Christ, our blessed Saviour. That wonderful old prophet Jacob, when, as he was dying, he blessed his children, said that the power should rest with Judah "till Shiloh come." For long years that expression puzzled our forefathers, and there have been many discussions as to the meaning of the name "Shiloh." At last, however, there has come to be a very general opinion among Bible scholars that Shiloh here means "one that shall give rest." Shiloh was to come that he might give rest; and as soon as Immanuel, the new Man, came to earth and began his blessed course of instruction preparatory to his final work, he said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am

meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Do not forget that two stages are here mentioned—Christ will not only *give* you rest, he will also make you *find* rest when you take his yoke. The Lord Jesus came as Shiloh to give rest; but how is this to be accomplished? Follow him in his career on earth and notice how he is ever preaching that rest is to be had in the spiritual domain. He does not speak of natural, of mere physical rest, he does not say much concerning moral rest, as though these could really change men, but he speaks of the "new creation"—one of the most interesting subjects for study in the whole Bible.

When the great God, Elohim, completed his creation, his name being mentioned thirty-five times (Gen. i. 1–ii. 3), we are told that God rested from all his works, and beheld that they were all very good. Four thousand years after Adam's fall the LORD, Jehovah, was working to make a new creation. In the physical case of the ark and the deluge it failed; in the physical and moral case of Israel it failed. But then Jesus Christ came, and what is he called? He is the new Man, the second Adam; he is the topstone of God's creation. But as in Adam's fall the resulting corruption and loss of rest worked downward from the man to the lowest form of creation, so in the recovery from the effects of the fall by the creation of the new Man the restoration of rest shall work downward from the higher to the lower, from the spiritual to the material.

When Jesus comes to earth, he is born as a babe, ripens into manhood, and at last, at the moment of his death, he looks up into heaven from Calvary's cross and says, "It is finished." Those very words are used concerning the creation of Elohim: "God ended [finished] his works." Now notice the beautiful thought contained in the next verse, after Jesus had bowed his head and said, "It is finished," and after he had given up the ghost. The Lord told the writer to say (John xix. 31) that it was "the preparation." The preparation for what? For the

Sabbath, and that "rest-day" was a high day.* Christ Jesus had to die, and the moment he gave his spirit into the hands of his Father he said, "It is finished." The new Man, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, was now finished; God's topstone of creation was ready for the new creation; the Son of man as the Son of God had now become the finished Man, that God's great purpose of rest might be accomplished. In the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the tenth verse we read: "He [Jesus Christ] that is entered into his [God's] rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." God the Father finished the first creation and rested; so also God the Son finished the second creation and rested; he entered into God's rest, and ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

The rest of the Lord Jesus Christ as the perfect Man has, then, begun. What means the wonderful statement of the Apostle Paul that "if any man be in Christ there is a *new creation*" (2 Cor. v. 17)? The moment that one by one we are made part of the body of Christ we are taken into Christ by the Holy Ghost. But Christ has entered into God's rest; therefore when we enter into Christ we enter into his rest. Now he that is entered into God's rest hath ceased from his own works. Blessed thought, that we have done with our own works, that we have done with every attempt to make a righteousness of our own, that we have done with every attempt to make glory for ourselves and to make men of ourselves! Why are we always trying to make grand men of ourselves? What fools we are! The new man is already made, and if you are a saved soul you cannot make another man, you cannot be another man; you are in Christ, and have ceased from your own works, as God did from his—and that is REST.

* Compare Mark xv. 42, and notice that it reads: "When the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath"—the day before the rest-day.

Now what does Jesus Christ find in the rest of God? He finds that the creation, the new man, answers to the mind of the Creator, Jehovah, and is sufficient to carry out all the purposes of God; therefore the delight of God is in his finished work. Christ also, as the Son of God, takes delight in the finished work and says, "It answers to the mind of God, it fulfils his purpose; let it work." He says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." My brother, you need not work; it is Christ who works, and you are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," which God has prepared that you may walk in them. Poor planning fools, what are we doing, fidgeting and fretting about to-morrow? We have no work of our own to do; Christ Jesus is the finished work, and we have but to walk according to the good works already prepared by God.

The original creation came into existence from the lowest to the highest. Then came the fall and took effect from the highest down to the lowest, so that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth. Now the recovery is to follow the same order as the fall. Sin began with the man and his wife with him, so the recovery begins with the new Man and the bride in him; the bride is now hidden in the Man until the day when she shall come forth complete to enjoy the creation of God. Brethren, the bride is now being formed in the Man, though invisibly to us, member by member, through the Holy Ghost. When Christ died and ascended into heaven he ceased absolutely from his own works, as God did from his; but as there is a third person of the Trinity, there must be a third work of creation, for God always works in trinities and unities. Thus the Holy Ghost comes when Christ's work is ended, and he takes poor miserable mortal men like you and me (but we are men, and God loves men), and one by one he introduces us into the Son of God, so that we are hidden in Christ. There is a new creation, but it is in Christ Jesus, out of sight. The work of the Holy Ghost, the third person in the Trinity, is

going on continually, and at last there will be a perfect bride, spotless and without blemish. When we lay a loved one in the ground let us think that it is only another member entered into Christ, perfected, finished, satisfied, complete. We are now in Christ Jesus judicially perfect, or, as St. Paul says (Col. ii. 10), we are "complete in him"; and as we read in Hebrews (x. 14), "By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are being sanctified." It took the Son four thousand years to be perfected. Four times in the Epistle to the Hebrews we read of Christ Jesus being perfected as the Captain of our salvation. We are now being taken, and are made judicially perfect in him, but we must be perfected by the Holy Ghost until every member, every muscle, every joint of the body of the Lord's bride is complete. Then one day this earth's thousands of years' toil shall cease, the millennium will come, and there will be a seventh day, a Sabbath; not a perfect day yet, for the eighth day is the perfect day. The seventh day is incomplete; it will be a revelation of God's glory to some degree, but there will be a final eighth day of glory, and the rest-day of the millennium will only be like the Jewish Sabbath.

The difference between the Sabbath of the Jew and the Sabbath of the Christian is that the Sabbath of the Jew comes after six days of labor—he rests from his past labors; but the Sabbath of the Christian comes at the beginning of the week, and is a preparation for labor. This is the reason why Christ apparently did away with the old Sabbath. He seemed to take a certain satisfaction in destroying the old Jewish idea of the Sabbath day, because he wanted the people to see that there was a better rest than the physical rest. Do not imagine, however, that you can work on day after day without a Sabbath. We need a Sabbath of rest that we may be fresh for the coming week, but we do not take our rest *after toil*; what we need is a rest to *prepare for work*. We are told in the Psalms that man has gone forth to his labor. Yes, be-

cause he is man; but as far as a man has Christ he has done with *labor* and has begun to carry out the *work* of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

Notice that in creation by Elohim there was but one temple—it was all earth; all earth worshiped God. Then worship ceased, in the best sense, because of sin, and for a time God deigned to manifest himself in a temple made with hands. The second creation, Christ Jesus, came and spoke of another temple—the temple of his body (John ii. 19). At that time the only temple of God was in Christ. The creation of the new Man was finished, and Christ went back to heaven. Now there is a third creation by the Holy Ghost; that is, the church. Now where is the temple? St. Paul writes to the Corinthians, “Ye are the temple of the living God” (2 Cor. vi. 16). God has one temple—not temples; there is not a plural to the word *temple* to be found in the Bible. There are many congregations, but there is only one temple, and we are being built, as living stones, into a holy temple of God, eternal in the heavens.

As God worked in the original creation upward, so in the new creation he works downward. In Christ Jesus the transformation began with his spirit, it ended with his sanctified body; he rose from the dead to find a finished work. What is happening now? The Holy Ghost begins to work out the new creation in the spirit of man; he works outward upon the soul of man—his will, his mind; he will work at last upon the body. I do not believe that the body has yet been redeemed at all; therefore when people talk of having no illness they do not seem to me to understand the Bible. There is sickness, there is death, there is corruption of the body; but, blessed be God, we are “waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” There will come a day when the millennium is over, the last day of trouble, the last day of trial, a day of mercy and blessing.

Moreover, we read in Revelation (xxi. 5) that "he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." The risen Man, the Son of God, and the risen men, the sons of God, stand out in all their perfection, and a new creation springs into existence at the word of God. I see "no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it"—there is once more one temple throughout all creation.

Brethren, we who have believed do enter into rest, having such a promise; and I beseech you take care, fear lest—there is no need for fear *of* now, for fear *of* is done away—fear lest any of you should seem to come short of it. Beloved, this is a great truth. Now look up and say, "Is this possible? By God's grace I will enter into this rest through Jesus Christ our Lord."

THE PEACE OF CHRIST

“ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,* to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”—COLOSSIANS III. 15.

THIS is the last one of the first three graces spoken of by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians (v. 22) as the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace—the love of God the Father, wrought in us by the Holy Spirit; the joy of the Lord Jesus, his own joy, wrought in us again by the Holy Spirit; and the peace of Christ—a wonderfully blessed thought. God’s teaching in regard to this life of privilege is not peculiar to one book or one page in God’s Word; it pervades every part of the Bible, and the man who is rightly instructed in the things of the kingdom cannot fail to find it there. The amazing thing is that any one could walk with Jesus and yet fail to see this wonderful truth. But as the Lord graciously expounded the Scriptures to the disciples walking to Emmaus, and opened the eyes of their understanding, and was made known to them in the breaking of the bread, so he will instruct us, and will bring us to know him in his resurrection power, and will give us his blessing and his peace. If Jesus Christ has been discerned by

* This is a very pregnant command, whether we take the words as given in the Authorized Version, “ Let the peace of *God* rule in your hearts,” or as they are more correctly given in the Revised Version, according to the best Greek manuscripts, “ Let the peace of *Christ* rule in your hearts.”

you, the highest privilege of your life will be to go and make him known to others in all his fullness.

It is most difficult to define or explain any one of the abstract terms that are used for the graces of the Holy Ghost. Did you ever try to explain to a child the meaning of any one of those elementary requirements which God demands of us in response to his blessing? Attempt, for instance, to tell any one what is meant by faith. When you turn to the only definition given, namely, that in the beginning of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, you find that though it is given by God himself it is really almost more confounding than explanatory to an unenlightened mind. The soul untutored by God cannot grasp the meaning of the words that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Any of those beautiful graces wrought by the Holy Ghost, and described as his fruit—love, joy, peace—cannot definitely be explained so as to satisfy the mind and the heart at the same time. If we speak negatively of the peace that men desire we get a better understanding of what is meant—no strife, no bitterness, no fret, no fear, no folly. Beloved, is not that the blessing which you long for—to get out of these terrible failures, follies, and falls that have been marring your past? Then come into the peace of Christ, wherein you shall be kept by the power of God, and let it rule in your hearts.

What is meant by the peace of Christ? It means that peace which he is (Eph. ii. 14); that peace which he made by the blood of the cross (Eph. ii. 15); that peace which he came to preach (Eph. ii. 17); that peace of which he said, "My peace I give unto you (John xiv. 27); that perfect, uninterrupted peace which he himself enjoyed all through a life of the greatest struggle, through peril and difficulty and opposition—the peace of Christ. We must acknowledge at the outset that this peace is something far above our natural reach. It is impossible for any one to attain to it by any effort, struggle,

labor, or personal work ; we are simply "called" by God the Holy Ghost to let it rule. When it seems too magnificent to be possible we are to force our hearts to a realization of the possibility by saying, "to the which also ye are called." We are called to it, therefore it must be possible.

We are called to "let the peace of Christ rule." This word *rule* (βραβεύετω) is a remarkable word, for it occurs in the Scriptures only in this one passage. It means to hold lawful authority, to exercise absolute force, so that authority and force are combined in the idea of actual power, which is to govern and hold sway over every faculty. The peace of Christ is to have lawful authority, is to exercise actual force, is to govern every detail of your life and your being—your heart, your mind, your soul, your spirit, your body. The peace of Christ is to rule in our hearts—that which is most likely to fail us. "My flesh and my heart faileth : but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever," says the psalmist. Is your heart quaking or troubled or sorrowful? It need never be troubled again, in the dark sense of the word. Of course there is sorrow in this life, of course there is pain and there is sickness unto death, of course there is affliction and weariness ; all these there must be, because we are mortal ; but there need not be troubled hearts, for the Lord Jesus himself says, "Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in me." Then he goes on to speak of working power, of comforting power, of peace power—"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world." "Now," says the Apostle, as a summary of his whole argument, "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts."

Have you ever taken time to consider what happens if the peace of Christ rules in a heart? What is the uninterrupted relation of such a heart to God? There comes, first, peace with regard to sin, as St. Paul says (Rom. v. 1): "Therefore

being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." We need never know what it is to be afraid of judgment, afraid of God's indignation, afraid of the penalties and pains of sin; never know what it is to be harassed about our sins, however guilty we may be; for trusting in the blood of Christ, we recognize that moment by moment the blood of Jesus Christ is perpetually cleansing us from all sin.

We have peace, again, with regard to God when we look up into his face and wonder, "How can he dwell with a poor wretch like me?" Then we grasp the thought, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isa. xxvi. 3). It gives us unceasing calm in our relation to God, because we recognize that we are accepted in the Beloved. Therefore, if I am kept in the peace of Christ, I can look up into God's face with as great calmness as Jesus Christ can;

"For in the person of his Son I am as near as he."

Is that true in your experience?

Again, if Christ's peace rules in our hearts, what is our relation to the world—in our business, our home and our family troubles? "As far as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men," says St. Paul. Men and women often say, "I have tried my best, and I really must quarrel with him, for he is so provoking." A lady came to me one day in great grief and anxiety about her soul; she wished very earnestly, she said, to be a Christian. I began questioning her to find out where the failure lay, and at last I learned that she was fretful and fidgety and was constantly losing her temper at home. I began to show her that to be fretful and angry was as bad as to be cursing another, and that to let her anger rise against God or man was in a sense to be guilty of murder. She looked at me and said, "O Mr. Peploe, I do assure you that there is no fault whatever in my case, because I never, never lose my temper

unless I am provoked—never.” No, and I do not think the devil does! Let us remember this: that to lose our temper when we are provoked shows that we are out of communion with our blessed Lord, and if the peace of Christ ruled in our hearts we could never again be provoked. Blessed thought! I cannot fully take it in. Moses was the meekest man that ever trod the earth, and yet he was so provoked that he spoke unadvisedly with his lips. Can I hope to be better than Moses? Blessed be God, I can, because Moses had not the risen and living Christ to dwell in his heart and to abide in him.

Are you looking at the last twenty or thirty or forty years and saying, “Look at that record—one great mass of vile stuff; it is enough to disgust a man with life. I cannot hope for anything better”? Can you not? That accumulated mass of thirty or sixty years is put before your eyes by the devil. But you need not consider your power to live for thirty years; you have to live only one moment at a time. Can Christ keep you this moment in a good temper and in purity? Then he can keep you the next moment and the next. Again and again I have to ask that silly question, How many steps do you take at a time as you walk down the street? One. Now the Lord can keep that one and the next one and the next. Why did Jesus say, “Give us this day our daily bread”? Because to-morrow will take care of itself, and it becomes to-day as soon as it arrives. Do not fret about to-morrow, but ask yourself, “Can Christ keep me in perfect peace with God this moment? Can he keep me in perfect peace with my neighbors?” He can keep us now, therefore he can keep us forever.

Look at the trials and troubles that come upon us—trials such as Christ himself had to bear because of his rebuking the sins and the dark transactions of the people around him; the very spitting in the face may not actually be done, but it is being mentally done to some of us every day of our lives. Even

in these things let the peace of Christ rule and there will not be a shadow of fret, any more than there was with Jesus. We look at death and think of parting from our loved ones, of all of the unknown beyond, and what may happen to those who are left behind, and we say, "Is it possible that the peace of Christ can rule while I lie on my death-bed in agonized pain of body, perhaps, and while I part from those I love?" "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called." Such may be your life.

There is something wonderful in this; but is it possible under the circumstances in which we live? You cannot possibly believe that God has traced all these blessed privileges in his Word for nothing. You know that they are not meant to apply to heaven, because there no shadow of trouble or temptation will cross our path. No, Christ's own peace—his enjoyment of peace with God and his loving peace toward his fellow-men—is meant to be ruling with perpetual power in our hearts every day, every hour, every moment of our life. Of course there must be some connection between the beautiful theory and the experimental enjoyment of it; and we must translate into the experimental whatever is offered to us as judicial or doctrinal truth by the power of the Holy Ghost, as our instructor and enabler in everything.

Now, if we understand what the Apostle means by this injunction, it becomes necessary for us to examine the whole of his argument which has preceded this injunction, and up to which he has led us. First, if this life of love, joy, and peace is to be known experimentally by us amid the difficulties of the home and the duties and the dangers of business and social life, we must recognize that it all depends upon Jesus Christ our Lord himself as a person. We are often asked, "What do you believe—what is your faith?" Our answer should be, "The question with you and me is not *what* I believe, but it is in *whom* I believe. 'I know *whom* I have believed.' I have

a personal knowledge of the Person in whom I believe, and I do not believe in *it*." We have nothing to do with "its" as Christians. We are taken out of the dead sphere into the living, and are called to deal with a personal Saviour. Christians should never say, "I went to the convention and I got *it*," as if *it* were a blessing apart from Christ. The blessing is connected with Christ; more than that, it is Christ himself.

St. Paul begins his Epistle to the Colossians by saying that he writes to "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ," in whom, he says further on, we have received all these blessings. From the sixteenth verse of the first chapter to the end of the twentieth verse St. Paul propounds a general principle concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, and shows how mighty, how powerful, how wonderful he is. No less than twelve times in those five verses does St. Paul mention the person of Christ, to show that Jesus is the creator of all things, the upholder of all things, the head of the church in all things, the fullness of God's power in all things, and the keeper of all things. Christ is all, and in all, in that passage.

But that is not sufficient. The Apostle goes on to say (verse 27) that there is a further blessing to be had, which is called "the riches of the glory of this mystery; . . . which is Christ in you." He tells us that we are in Christ. That gives us position, it gives us security, it gives us peace with God, it gives us power in the presence of God, it takes us into the heavenly sphere, and everything that is wanted in the heavenly sphere is found by our being in Christ. But we are down here on the earth as well, and St. Paul knows that we need something for this sphere also. For the heavenly sphere the mystery of the gospel is "Christ in you, the hope of glory"; but the Apostle proceeds to say (verse 28), "That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: . . . according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." And in the sixth verse of the second chapter he says, "As ye have therefore

received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him." Then in the tenth verse of the second chapter he says, "Ye are complete in him."

Up to this point all this is judicial. St. Paul carries us a step further by saying that Jesus has died and risen—and what has happened? So you died and you rose with Christ, and therefore (iii. 3) "your life is hid with Christ in God." There is one step further (iii. 11)—when we come to the fullness of the understanding of our state and privileges, then "Christ is all, and in all." Here we have the starting-point in the life of peace. If you wish the peace of Christ to rule in your heart you must be in Christ, you must have Christ in you, you must understand that Christ makes you complete before God, and that, to your soul's experience, Christ is all, and in all. Verily our creed is one: Christ, Christ, Christ. You remember the dear old martyr in England, in the days of the bloody Mary, who, as he went toward Newgate to be burned with fire, was enabled to turn toward the people and say, "Christ, Christ, brethren, none but Christ." We must put away our old creeds, put away our old dignities, put away our old claims to prominence in the eyes of the world, and lay hold on this one truth—one only—that our faith and our power are not in a thing, but in a person, Christ, Christ forever.

But St. Paul would have us turn the judicial and the doctrinal into the experimental. Before the peace of Christ can rule in our hearts we must understand what blessings are intended to be brought to us in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle here grandly describes our position. He says, first of all (ii. 20), that we died with Christ, and are therefore dead with Christ (iii. 3)—that is judicial. Next he says (ii. 12) that we are buried with Christ; then (iii. 1) that we are risen with Christ. Dead, buried, risen with Christ! Furthermore (iii. 1), we shall sit with Christ in heavenly places at the right hand of God, for if we died with Christ and rose with him, our life

is hid with Christ in God (iii. 3). Dead with Christ; buried with Christ in baptism! I wonder how much you comprehended of what your baptism signified, what it ought to have been. It is a blessed thing to be truly baptized, because our baptism is the burial service of the "old man." What business, then, have we unearthing a stinking corpse? Leave the old nature where it was; place it on the cross; bury it with Christ. You are buried and risen with Christ; you are seated with Christ in heavenly places.

These principles, says St. Paul, are to be turned by us into practice, through the power of the Holy Ghost working in us. Notice how this is to be accomplished. If I died with Christ, what is he supposed to have done with my "old man," in whose ways I walked when I lived the old life? That old man, my old life, my old ideas, all connected with the old existence, is taken to the place of death, and is supposed to have been disposed of through the action of death, because death renders a thing powerless and places it in a position where action is impossible. Therefore, when I died with Christ, my old nature was supposed to have been placed in a condition as well as in a position of death.

Now look at the experimental side of this truth. St. Paul says, "Ye are dead" (iii. 3); and he proceeds, "Mortify therefore." You died, now put it to death. Brethren, we have an awful prerogative. Notice three particular processes which we must carry out to make this life experimental, and without which the peace of Christ will never rule in our hearts. First, because I am dead I must make dead—no, I am not dead; I am supposed to have died, and there is the difference. Many people talk about Christians as being actually dead, because Christ died, but it is not so; judicially I died, therefore it is my place to put into practice in my experience what Jesus Christ accomplished for me. "Mortify therefore your members." What are your members? "Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate

affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." Brethren, be very honest in dealing with this matter. I wish you would bring up before your own eyes, write them down upon paper, what the things of the flesh are which bring you into captivity again and again. What is your great temptation? Is it your lust? Then confess it. Get down on your knees and write down solemnly before God what is your besetting sin. Is it laziness, covetousness, selfishness, evil desires and tastes? Let God tell you your sins. An awful responsibility lies with each of us of making dead practically by the power of the Holy Ghost what Christ made dead judicially for us.

Go back to the awful time in the history of Israel when Achan brought shame upon the camp because he was covetous and took that wedge of gold and that garment and hid them in his tent. When the Lord convicted him of the sin before the whole nation he had to be brought out and stoned before them all, and his body was covered with that great mass of stones. The valley of Achor became "the door of hope" (Hosea ii. 15) for better things, for more victories—the only door of hope that any one could know. When God wishes to comfort Israel he says, through the prophet Hosea, that he will take them into the valley of Achor, that they may stone unto death the beastly things. We are ashamed of them, are we not? You would be ashamed to speak of the jealousy which you felt because your reputation was not as good as your neighbor's, or of the lust that was a disgrace to your manhood, or of the inordinate affection or evil concupiscence that has been dragging you down. Brethren, curse it; give it to the grave; stone it. It must be done. What must you do? Does not Jesus say that it is better for you to pluck out your right eye, or to cut off your right hand, than that your whole body should be cast into hell? Mortify, put to death, or, as St. Paul says to the Romans, "Reckon yourselves to be corpses." He

is speaking there about the obligation of reckoning by faith, and, coming to the practical, he says, "I have told you to reckon. Did you die with Christ? You must make that death real." This is no sweet and easy process; it is a rough-and-ready work which we must do, as lynching is rough-and-ready justice. My brother, lynch your passions without delay; do it once for all. They are like weeds, and will rise up if they can. There are terrible tap-roots to these passions of ours. We may cut off the top, and may pull and pull, and think that we have them all out, but within a few weeks they cover the land again. You may never pull up all the roots, but your purpose, your determination, your action henceforth must be: "By the grace of God I will put to death, I will stone, the evil passions." You may have to do it openly, before the camp, perhaps. Achan had no quiet, retired hole in which he could be buried comfortably without the public hearing of it. His sin has been on record for three thousand years and more. I have known men who have had to lose all their character to win their souls. It is, indeed, a solemn process, and you will not enjoy it. How could you enjoy it? There is some downright damnable thing in most men who call themselves Christians, and they are hugging and cherishing it; but the Lord knows where it is, and he points it out. My brother, what have you in your tent? Out with it; let it be cursed; be a man and stone it, and that act will be the door of hope to you. If we are to be seated at the right hand of God in heavenly places we must get rid of the earthly, or the peace of Christ can never rule.

St. Paul says in the second place, "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds" (Col. iii. 9), and in the eighth verse, "Now ye also put off"—you have put off, therefore put off. You say these things are anachronisms; they are paradoxes; they are seeming contradictions. Beloved, it would be very easy to sail into heaven in a sort of Venetian gondola, gliding

smoothly down the waters without a single jar or fret, because Christ has done everything. I have heard of a kind of cart which is made for traveling over new roads. It has to go bumping along through the Californian hills in an amazing manner, because the roads are rough and the difficulties are great. The men and women who hope to go to heaven in a gondola will have to ride in one of those rough-and-tumble wagons before they reach their journey's end.

What is this "old man" which we must put off? We have buried him in baptism, but here he is, like a jack-in-the-box, always jumping up on the slightest provocation. The Apostle Paul says that we are to put off the old man, and he says, "Now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice." "What! I may not indulge in just a little spite against Mrs. ——?" "Not one shadow of ill will for the man who did me that great wrong, who defamed my character so uncharitably?" "Put off anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy. Lie not one to another." The Apostle Paul is very hard on us—very hard indeed. "May I not tell a little society lie? May I not say 'Not at home' when I am?" No. "But all society does." I do not care for all the society of Europe or America. Brethren, to be practical, would God say "Not at home" if he were? If so, then you will not have much chance of blessing when you go to him with your prayers; you may cry in vain, if he is "not at home" to a liar. But he is at home; he is always waiting, and he says, "Come unto me, *all* ye." We must learn to be true, for God requires truth in the inward parts; we have put off the old man in theory, we must now put him off in practice—put off the old man Dignity, the old man Reputation, the old man Honor-among-men. These things are very practical, and when St. Paul says that when we died with Christ we put off the old man with Christ, he still has to say, "Put the old man to death," and "Put off the old man," because we have put him off judicially in Christ Jesus.

This involves first our walk, that was mortified, and then our talk, that is put off.

Now, thirdly, St. Paul says, "Ye have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. . . . Put on therefore." You did put on, now put on. You did put off, now put off. You did die, now die. Everybody is to see how far the doctrinal has become the experimental in our lives. God says that what he had for us in Christ Jesus we must take by the power of the Holy Ghost. "Ye have put on the new man." What a glorious thought that Christ is the new Man and is sufficient for us in everything! Yet he is not bidding us be like him now; he is bidding us put on his nature experimentally, moment by moment. Christ is all, and in all; let him be put on and cover everything; let him meet every need, let him guard every circumstance. What he did for me in dying and rising and taking his place at God's right hand, he is to do for me and around me and over me in and by the Holy Ghost. I am to put on the new man because I put Christ on, and as I put on the new man I am to put on—what? "As the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity [or love], which is the bond of perfectness." On top of them all—on top of humility, meekness, forgiveness, tenderness, forbearance, and patience—put on love; love, which considers the good of others.

Now you have not a fret with man, not a worry in your heart; you have cast off the world so far as you know by the grace of God, and have put away those passions and lusts; you have put off the old man that kept you in such thralldom, and you have put on the new Man, which is Christ Jesus. Now, then, step out into that to which you are called. What is it?

Peace—the peace of Christ in this dark world of sin. The blood of Jesus whispers peace, and I step out in that peace of God and realize to what I am called. Yet “many are called, but few chosen.” This is your calling; for God’s sake apprehend it and “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called”—called to holiness, called to conformity, called to peace. Oh, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts!

But Paul says that we are called to this peace “in one body.” That is the great key-thought to the Epistle to the Colossians. Paul says that many people are very full of works—people who deny themselves everything that they can, and are always practising humility, but who have never been vitally joined to the Head. In this one epistle the “body” is mentioned eight times—three times in the first chapter, four times in the second, and once in the third. Twice it refers to the body of sin, the evil body, but the other six times refer to the body to which Christians belong. What is that body? St. Paul says that it is the body of Christ, which is the church (i. 18). In the twenty-fourth verse he says that we must bear our part in the afflictions of Christ to complete the body. We are called in one body, therefore we are members one of another. Why does one member hurt or annoy another, or cause another to fidget and fret? Among Christians that ought never to be. Children, why vex your parents any more by the assertion of self-will and by the manners of the day, which often make home a curse instead of a blessing? No reverence and no respect—why? Because of the self-assertion and the proclaiming of independence. Independence indeed! It is carried much too far when the young people draw off and refuse obedience to those who are put over them. There ought to be no discord in the home, because we are all called to be one body; and if I wound my father or my mother I am blighting my own life, for I am marring the body, which is one.

If this is the life of the true believer—peace, perfect peace,

from night to morning and from morning to night, in body, soul, and spirit, in circumstances of trial and difficulty—do you wonder that the Apostle Paul closes this part of his exhortation with these words: “And be ye thankful”? That is such a beautiful thought in the Greek. This is the only place where we are called eucharists—*εὐχάριστοι*.^{*} We are called to live the eucharistic life, one blessed sacrament of love, joy, peace, and thanksgiving—for that is what *eucharist* means, a life of thanksgiving. I do not see how we could be otherwise than thankful if we take this thought into our hearts—peace, peace, never to be broken again. What is the purpose of our police? To keep the peace in the temporal sphere. What does the blessed Lord wish to do? To keep the peace in the spiritual sphere. My brother, will you let him into your heart that he may keep it? Say to him from this moment what a poor helpless subject ought to say: “My Lord and my God.” Then he shall rule in the midst of his enemies, until they are all put under his feet; and when he has brought all enemies under his feet, for me individually, as well as in general, collectively, then he shall give up the kingdom to God the Father, so that while now Christ is all, and in all, then God shall be all, and in all.

* The noun is used in Ephesians iv. 5, 20, but that is not a parallel case.

DELIVERANCE AND SERVICE

“That God would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.”—LUKE I. 74, 75.

THE times when God in his infinite mercy has brought special blessings to a part of the human race, intending that those blessings shall spread to all mankind, have always been times of special darkness and difficulty, of danger and sin, for the sons of men. This may be seen in the time of Noah, in the times of Moses and of David, in the deliverance from the Babylonian captivity, at the birth of the Lord Jesus, in the days of the Emperor Constantine, and at the dawn of the Reformation under Luther. Whenever there have been special outpourings of the grace of God, and manifestations of his love and power in a peculiar manner, it has seemed to be at times when darkness has been over the land, and gross darkness over the people. This was specially true at the birth of the Lord Jesus, so that when Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, poured out the magnificent psalm in which the words of our text occur, it would have been said by any observant spiritually minded man that the whole world was utterly given over to corruption, and that there was, humanly speaking, no hope for the human race.

Some of us are inclined to think that gross darkness covers the people of the earth at the present time, not in the sense

in which the gloom of ignorance, superstition, and wickedness extended over mankind when our Lord Jesus appeared in the flesh; not, perhaps, as it covered the earth in the days of Luther; but, combining the prominent characteristics of those two periods, we might say that in our day there are the reflections of the gross darkness of libertinism and of the darkness of superstition. The pendulum swings from one to the other, and those who are free-thinkers to-day are idolaters to-morrow, and those who are held by the bonds of superstition to-day often pass into atheism to-morrow.

Now are we to be discouraged and disheartened so as to think that there can be no blessing in our day, because corruption is visible on every hand and because people flatly refuse to accept the gospel? On the contrary, these dark days are the very times when God deigns to bring his special revelation of Christ to the world. He may be revealed to only a few at first—to one here like Zacharias, to another there like Anna the prophetess, and to another like the aged Simeon, waiting for the Lord to appear in his majesty and glory. He may come in his fullness to only a few, but he does come. He came to Moses, to Aaron, and to Joshua; he came to David and to Solomon; he came to the people who were looking for him when he was born of the lowly Virgin Mary; he came in the days of Constantine and manifested himself as the light and liberty of the gospel among the Romans; he came in the days of Luther; and the nineteenth century need not close without a magnificent blessing coming to a listening people, to a willing people, throughout the length and breadth of this earth. Those who receive this blessed revelation may not be able to influence many, but each one can spread the light a little, each one can bring some others to Christ. Instead of being disheartened because of the great darkness that envelops the mass of the people, this is the very time for us to expect the blessing of the Almighty God to be manifested. Charles

Kingsley, who is better known as a novelist and a historian than as a poet, wrote these lines :

“ The day of the Lord is at hand, at hand,
Its storms roll up the sky ;
But the nations sleep, starved or corpses cold ;
All dreamers toss and sigh.
But the night is darkest before the morn ;
When the pain is sorest the child is born ;
And the day of the Lord is at hand.”

God grant that we all may come to see the Horn of Salvation which God has raised up. There is a Horn of Salvation, and he is becoming manifest, just as the infant Jesus was being revealed when Zacharias uttered his psalm. Jesus is coming—the living Jesus ; and the aged Simeon, however aged, may live to see him and to say, “ Lord, now thou art letting [as the Greek reads] thy servant depart in peace ; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” Remember that salvation has come that it may be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of God’s people Israel. Zacharias might be called the prophet, the sweet singer, who sang the dying song of the old Judaic dispensation, and at the same time the morning bird that ushered in the coming of the glorious gospel of liberty. His words were meant to apply first to Israel after the flesh and then to the boundless Israel which comprises the whole family of the faith.

There is a rationalistic school in the present day which interprets this song of Zacharias as referring only to the things that were temporal. They scruple not to say that the enemies out of whose hands these people were meant to be delivered were the Romans and any other enemies that might have been attacking Israel. But, in the first place, what would any physical deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Roman authorities be calculated to do toward bringing about true holiness and righteousness? In the second place, would it be

at all probable that Zacharias would speak only of a temporal deliverance, when he refers to the oath given to their father Abraham—which was preëminently a spiritual promise, and only containing a temporal signification in that Israel was to be blessed as a nation?

Since, then, this hymn refers to a spiritual deliverance, we may claim it as our own, because, according to St. Paul (Gal. iii. 7, 16, 29): “They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. . . . Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. . . . And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Therefore St. Paul boldly says of the Gentile race in Galatia, to whom he wrote—poor, helpless, carnal Christians though they were, with but little light upon spiritual matters compared with what we have—that if they were Christ’s in any sense, then they were Abraham’s seed; therefore we as well as they have a right to claim all the promises that were given to the descendants of Abraham, if we will only take them through faith in Jesus Christ.

The promise recalled by Zacharias is one of the most difficult for us to believe of any to be found in God’s Word. It seems altogether impossible of realization for men in the present life.* But the words must refer to the present world; they cannot refer to the next, for there, of course, the promise will be absolutely fulfilled by the removal of every enemy. It must be a promise for this life, “that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him [that is, God] without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.”

If this be true, then what are we to understand by the

* Whether we receive the reading of the Revised Version, which omits the expression “all the days of our life,” or whether we retain it and say it is to be all the days of our life, it matters not; the significance is the same.

words, as interpreted by the ordinary rules of the English language and by the teachings of God's holy Book? We preach no new gospel, for then it could not be true; but we desire to impress upon your minds and hearts a vivid realization of the necessity of understanding the meaning of a truth which you may have been acquainted with mentally and have refused to accept spiritually, because, forsooth, it seemed impossible of fulfilment in your experience. Now let the truth contained in these words penetrate from the brain to the heart and from the heart to the spirit, and ask yourself what it would mean for you if this experience were fulfilled in you—that, being delivered out of the hand of your enemies, you might serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of your life. If this is impossible now, when will it be possible? If not to-day, how can it be to-morrow?

We are to believe God's words as they stand, and are not to pare down their meaning until it has become altogether changed. Expositors repeatedly take a blessed promise like this and whittle it away until nine tenths of the blessedness of the promise is gone, and they try to convince themselves that God requires no more. "We cannot live without giving way to temper; we cannot live without native lusts; we cannot live above trials and troubles," say the ordinary Christians, and so, alas! have said ministers from the pulpit. It is a sad and grievous blot upon our Christian teachers that they will not let God say what he really has said, but that they must turn God's words into something else.

Fourteen years ago I was invited to go to the northern part of London, where there was to be a great gathering of clergy, and to set before them my belief as to the holy life that is possible for every believer. The letter of invitation expressed the conviction that I was in danger of preaching perfectionism, and that there would be great likelihood of passivity and other evils, if men should come to receive the gospel which I

preached. A leader of the church sat in the chair as arbiter between me and the great body of clergy before me. I tried to show from the sixth of Romans what kind of a life could be lived with regard to sin. I pointed out from the Church of England Prayer-book many of the expressions, such as: "That it may please Thee to keep us this day without sin;" "That we may walk pleasing before God all the days of our life." At the end of my address the venerable and valued chairman arose, and without scruple or hesitation flung out these sad words: "Heresy, heresy! I call it odious heresy, and I say that it is for the glory of God to bring us into sin, that he may have the honor to pull us out." I do not think that the dear old father meant all that his words so sadly expressed; he must have meant that it is God's glory to pull us out of sin when we fall into it. Let us take God's Word as it stands, and try to find out the message that it contains for us.

This blessing is so wonderful that the Holy Ghost instructed Zacharias to say that it is not a mere hope or a mere promise, but it is a covenant, and a covenant confirmed by the oath of God. Zacharias says that God has raised up a Horn of Salvation "to perform the mercy (promised) to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he swore to our father Abraham." When God makes a covenant men ought to hang their heads with shame that they dare to doubt its fulfilment; but when God deigns to confirm that covenant by an oath, is it not, as the Apostle says in the Epistle to the Hebrews (vi. 18), "that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong encouragement"?

But not only does God's oath confirm this covenant, that we may be forced to believe his word; Zacharias also declares that God has sworn "that he would grant unto us"—that he would *give* us—this deliverance; therefore this is like any other gift of God, not to be attained by the effort of man, by struggle or

by toil, not by man's zeal or energy—it is by the gift of God. No wonder that St. Paul says, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." What gift? Not simply forgiveness. God does give forgiveness through the blood of the Lamb; but St. Paul refers to the whole gift of salvation. Likewise in this song of Zacharias the gift of salvation includes not merely the forgiveness of sins, but the continuance of grace throughout the whole period of trial, until the final issue in the covenant, when we are made one with Christ in his own perfect inheritance in glory.

Now our great enemy, the devil, will try to deceive you and will tempt you to say, "It is all very well for one who is wrapped up in quiet in the wilds of Africa or Asia to talk about the grace of God being sufficient, but I have to face a peculiarly stern and painful difficulty." Does not God know the circumstances in which you are placed? Is God Almighty in the dark about you? God knows you and your circumstances, and he sees that "there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Cut off your right hand, or tear out your tongue, rather than lie to God by saying that there is no deliverance for you because of your "peculiar circumstances." God has put you in those circumstances, or you would better leave them. If you are not glorifying God where you are, get out of that position as quickly as possible. But if you are in the right place, remember that Almighty God is working for you, and that he has made an oath that you, "being delivered out of the hand of your enemies, might serve him." This word *serve*, as used in the Bible, cannot be taken in any ordinary earthly sense. The noun and the verb occur twenty-six times in the New Testament, and this is the only passage in which *serve* could possibly mean anything but the spiritual service of God.

The other twenty-five passages make it perfectly clear that the Holy Ghost refers to spiritual service like that of the priests in the sacrifice and worship of the temple. Therefore we are justified in taking the verb *serve* here to mean that we should walk in fellowship with God, that we should offer sacrifices pleasing to God, and that we should enter into the holy place and there serve him according to his holy ordinance.

We conclude, then, that this promise is meant for us, and is to last all our life, and that God has sworn to give this blessing to those who have been delivered out of the hand of their enemies. First of all, then, WHO ARE OUR ENEMIES? I would sum them up under the five titles of sin, the flesh, the world, the devil, and death—if we consider death as distinct from the devil. Is it true that the Horn of our Salvation, Jesus Christ, who was raised up according to the oath of God to give us deliverance, has actually delivered us out of the hand of these five enemies? God does not say that he will deliver from the *existence* or from the *presence* of these enemies; he only promises to deliver us out of the *hand* of our enemies through the Horn of our Salvation. Not for one moment are we to think that these enemies are dead.* Our enemy is not dead; he is living; what you have to do is to kill the right man. Kill yourself. You died—not your enemies—you died in Christ; your enemies live still, but how are you delivered out of their hand? Look at what the Lord has done for us.

SIN—we do not speak of sins—is an enemy. Sins are the fruit or wounds produced by the enemy that lies at the root of all sins. What we need is not to be simply pardoned for sins;

* Twenty years ago men used to talk about a Jew who, when he was brought into the church of Christ, was counted as dead by his family, and was nominally buried by them; a headstone was also erected to say that he was dead and gone. They used to say that our position with regard to sin and the flesh was that of a father to whom the child was dead. No, no, there is no death in this case.

the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse us from all sin, and the forgiveness of sins is different from deliverance from sin. Our sins are all written in a book of acts committed, and they are there to testify against us; God blots them out with the blood of Jesus, but that act does not deliver us from the presence and the pressure of sin as a taskmaster. The Lord Jesus, our Horn of Salvation, has given us deliverance from the hand of sin. How has this been effected?

Sin is illustrated by Egypt in its old power over Israel, and holds us in bondage as a taskmaster holds his slaves, so that we cannot have our own way. The Lord Jesus gives us deliverance from the hand of this enemy exactly as God gave Israel deliverance from the hand of the Egyptians. There were certain foes that pursued the people into the sea, but were drowned. They resemble those sins that pursue us day after day; God slays them, and they lie dead before our eyes. But the power of Egypt as a nation remained intact after the Israelites were delivered from bondage. The Israelites were absolutely set free from the power of those enemies by the waters of the Red Sea that rolled between them and the Egyptians; they could feel that the great sea of death stood between them and their former taskmasters, and they could claim, on the eastern shore, to be absolutely free from the hand of Egypt. Thus we go down into Christ's death, and, rising on the other side, we find that our sins have been blotted out and buried; but sin, the old taskmaster, still lives and stands there. Where? On the other side of the Red Sea of Christ's blood. Jesus died for me, so that I died with him. Therefore St. Paul says (Rom. vi. 7, 18) you are "freed [justified] from sin, . . . being made free from sin." We are not only justified, but we are set free from the power of sin, like slaves who have been freed from an old taskmaster.

Now how are we to meet the temptations which come from sin, our old master? A man said to me some time ago, "There

is that old power, that taskmaster, sin, that rises up again and again and holds me down; just when I am trying to be faithful this old cursed master rises up and claims me, and he gets control of me." That is the experience of almost every man until, by the grace of God, the blessed truth becomes perfectly clear that Jesus Christ did really set us free from the thralldom of sin—that indwelling corruption, that evil-working power that has held us in bondage. If, now, the taskmaster of the former days rises up and claims us, looking, as it were, over the hedge on to the property of our new Master, our loved Lord—when the old taskmaster shakes his fist at you or me and says, "Come back, you dog, you are my slave," just remember that you are on the territory of the new Master, and that a hedge surrounds it which the old master cannot climb. Our new Master says, "You are mine, my child; tell him so." The Lord does the keeping, and all you have to do is to claim the position. It seems to me that our faith fails in that we do not half claim what God Almighty has given to us; we do not take our rights. We become slaves to God because we love him. We have been set free from sin, but we shall never know what this blessed liberty is if we are looking over the hedge and saying, "My dear old master, I wish I could go back to you." No; our new Master, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, must claim our souls as his own because we love him; and then we need have no fear whatever of the old master on the other side of the hedge, for he has no power. We may not hope ever in this life to be entirely free from the presence of that indwelling corruption called sin; the taskmaster may rest for a time, but he has only to rise up in order to terrify us, if we are off our guard. If you once begin lusting after the flesh-pots of Egypt, those dirty old leeks and cucumbers that smell so strongly, you can go back to them easily enough if you wish, and you will find that the old Egypt power is as much alive as ever. But we have been set free by the power of the living Christ and by

virtue of his death, and we experience this deliverance from the active power of sin by putting Christ's death between ourselves and our old taskmaster.

Now with regard to the **FLESH**. The flesh is distinct from sin, because it is a part of our very nature. Sin is a taskmaster ruling over us; the flesh is an evil principle working in every man by nature. It is that flesh which makes us ready to yield to the claims of sin, the taskmaster, even when we are children of God. Both sin and the flesh remain, even in the regenerate, up to the very last moment of our earthly existence. Sin, the master, and the flesh, the slave willing to serve him, are always ready to bring about our discomfiture, if for one moment we turn our eyes away from Christ.

Have we been delivered from the hand of the flesh? What says the blessed Word in the eighth of Romans?—that “there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” What says the fifth of Galatians? “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” What does that mean? In the center of every man's being stands his ego, his “I,” the personality that chooses every moment what shall be done. Now on the one hand the Holy Spirit in the child of God calls upon this ego to choose the right, and on the other hand the flesh, that corrupt thing, beckons the ego into sin. St. Paul says in the fifth of Galatians that at every moment “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; . . . that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” This means that “I,” the personality, must choose; and if I choose for one moment to yield to the flesh, the predominating influence is on that side of the hedge and I tumble over into the ditch of sin. But if I yield myself to live in the Spirit, as I have the power to do, I will then walk in the Spirit. Thus, when the Spirit of God prompts me to follow the right, if I obey, at that moment I pass under the predominating influence of the Spirit, and am

living in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit and obeying the Spirit, and the flesh, blessed be God, is left out in the cold. This is the walk in the Spirit which every child of God can have. The one deciding influence of the moment is my will. If I say to the Holy Ghost power, "Yes, Lord," I am in the sphere of the Spirit. If I say "Yes" to the flesh, I have fallen under the power of sin, but through my own fault. We may thus be delivered from the hand of the flesh, although it is never extinct. As the death of Christ sets us free from the power of sin as a taskmaster, so we are saved from corruption of the flesh by the death of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit within us, in order "that as Christ was raised by the glory of God the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life"—the Holy Ghost life.

The WORLD presents its temptations to all of us, and it presents them to us in two separate forms, either alluring or attacking. In each case we are delivered from the hand of the world by virtue of the death of Christ, as we were delivered from sin and the flesh. But the power of Christ's work will only operate for our benefit as we, moment by moment, exercise faith. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John v. 4). When the *attacking world* comes, like Amalek—the hillside foe that should have been our friend—when he attacks us and tries to put us out of existence, what are we to do? When we claim to have a new life and liberty, the Amalekites always rise up against us—they may be our own families, our own friends—and a pretty fierce attack they make upon us. How are we to meet them? By faith. As long as the hands of Moses are held up with the rod of power in them, Israel finds that under the strength of that rod Amalek is beaten and the Lord's people have perpetual victory. Let the world attack you; the Lord is strong enough to give you the victory. Jesus Christ was born into this world as the Son of man, "that he might deliver us [the Greek is "draw us

out"] from this present evil world" (Gal. i. 4). Christ stands ready to take us out of the place of temptation, if we are ready to come out when God calls us.

As examples of the *seductive world*, look at those who tempted Israel—Moab, Ammon, and Edom. What are we to do with reference to them? "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Offer yourselves to the Lord continually, and you will find that you are delivered out of the hand both of the attacking and of the seducing enemy. The world says, "Come and have a little dance; come and have a little game; let us take a little pleasure. We need not play for more than pennies, but let us have a game of whist." Beloved, what we must reply is this: "I am doing a great work, and I cannot go down. I am building the walls of Jerusalem." When people ask, "What is the harm in a little pleasure?" we should always answer, "I have not time to let my Master's business stand idle and to be wasting precious moments." You need not ask if it is wrong to go to a ball or to a theater; preach Christ, live Christ, look for Christ, and walk with Christ, and the world will very soon drop you. The Lord has taken his oath to deliver us, and if we take our oath not to have anything to do with the world, God Almighty will keep us in safety. Living faith in a living Christ will keep us from falling under temptation from the world.

Some people think that the DEVIL is dead. They must have had a large dose of morphine to put them into a very sound sleep. Martin Luther is said to have had a dream in which he thought that there was great commotion in hell. One of the demons came down shouting, "Tidings, my lord Beelzebub, from earth: Luther is going to preach the doctrine of justification to-morrow." Beelzebub said, "What shall we do to counteract the effect of such a discourse?" One demon said,

“I will go into the congregation and move from soul to soul, and will say, ‘It is all a lie; there is no devil.’” Beelzebub answered, “You fool, every man knows that there is a devil; he has only to look within and he will see that he is there. That will not do.” Another evil spirit said, “I will go and say that there is a God and there is a devil, but there is no hell.” Beelzebub answered, “You fool, that will be of no avail, for every man knows that there is a hell.” Then a third said, “Let me go, and I will deceive the whole congregation.” “What will you say?” “I will say to them that there is a God, and he is very just and holy; that there is a devil, and he is very strong and wicked; that there is a hell, and it is everlasting, and its torment is very bitter, but that they need not go there. I will say that there will be time to repent when they are dying, therefore that they may put off the day.” “You will be successful,” exclaimed the arch-fiend. “That is what we want. Tell them to put off the time for repenting and believing; they will all be glad to do that.” There are demons at work the world over, and they are saying to every one who has not entered into this life of deliverance, “Put it off for a little while; it is not necessary to do it to-day.” Thanks be to God, we are told (Heb. ii. 14) that the Lord Jesus was revealed that he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. Christ came to bring to naught the great immoral power of the devil, in order that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemy, might claim to be free in the strength of the Lord; and if we trust in his strength we shall find that the devil cannot prevail.

Lastly, what about DEATH? There are men who all their lifetime are in bondage for fear of death. Christ Jesus died to set us free from this enemy also, and though death exists around us, and already has a grip upon some of us, there is now for us no sting in death, “thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” In the death

of Jesus, in his resurrection and in his life on high, we are delivered from this enemy also as we are from every other.

Now what is to be the outcome of this deliverance? Being delivered out of the hand of the enemy, we each of us have one blessed privilege—duty, if you like that word—toward Almighty God; it is that we may serve him, that we may perform the blessed offices and privileges of priests, offering to God our holy service in his holy sanctuary, keeping apart from the rest of the world, having the Lord for our inheritance, being provided for by God out of his bounty and love, and never even needing to pray for our daily meat. Who ever heard of a priest in Jerusalem praying for his leg of mutton? He knew that the Lord would find him all the provision he needed, and when he came to a certain age he retired from the activities of life and was provided for as a pensioner on the bounty of God.

We often forget that we are meant to serve God now, in this world, in holiness and righteousness. In this passage, at least, holiness refers to our attitude and conduct of life toward God, and righteousness to our attitude and conduct toward man. What did God mean when he said that we should henceforth serve him night and day in his holy temple in holiness? He meant that the very mind and nature and being of God is to be reflected in us, and that we are to have fellowship with him. The attitude of our souls toward God is to be one of holiness. God is holy, therefore we are to be holy.

Now toward man we are to live in righteousness. From this day forth we are always to do what is right to our neighbors—never to take advantage of any one, never selfishly to take the best of anything. When the flesh has been subordinated to the Spirit we shall not be greedy; then we shall not be luxurious at the cost of the time and comfort of others. The whole man given over to God, and not to the world, will

keep us from wearing jewelry that hampers our souls and turns us from the Lord. Then we cannot go into company where Christ is not the ruler; we cannot take partnership in any business upon which we cannot ask God's blessing. We are to serve God in holiness and righteousness. I heard of a man in Scotland who was said to be very godly and earnest. The question was asked by a stranger in the place if this man were as good as he was described—as much out and out for God. The answer was, "Well, I think he is straight enough toward God, but he is a wee bit twistical toward men." A great many Christians appear to be all right on Sunday toward God, but from Monday to Saturday are very apt to play "twistical" tricks toward men. God give us the grace that will make us live in holiness and in righteousness before him, the great Searcher of hearts. "Walk before me," said God to Moses, "and be thou perfect," or sincere and upright.

Finally, this service is to last all the days of our life. What a glorious thought! Our service never ceases, because it is God who works, not I. "By the grace of God I am what I am," says St. Paul: ". . . I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

God Almighty grant us grace to see that this life of service may be carried out from henceforth in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.

ONE THING—ALL THINGS

“ But (this) one (thing I do).”—PHILIPPIANS III. 13.

“ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”—PHILIPPIANS IV. 13.

IN the original Greek four of these six words from the third chapter of the Philippian Epistle do not appear, but have been introduced into the English version by the translators. St. Paul wrote but two words, which are composed of two letters each: *ἐν ᾧ*, “ But one.” A blessed little sentence! But ONE what? One God, one Father, one Home, one Saviour, one precept, one supreme idea, one desire, one conviction, one impulse, one purpose, one doctrine, takes possession of every faculty of my being, every moment of my life, every action, every possession; “ but one ” and “ with that ONE before me, I can say,” says the great Apostle to the Gentiles, “ that I press toward the mark.” Why? “ Because I am enabled, in the face of that ONE, whatever we may understand by it, to forget those things which are behind, and to reach forth unto those things which are before, until it impels me at every point of my being to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Have you ever seen a race-course—not the evil professional race-course, where dangers beset every child of God, but the race-course of boyhood or college life? Have you ever watched a race or taken part in one? Have you ever felt the instantaneous effect of the word

"Go!" upon your whole being? Every faculty impels you to press toward the mark, a white tape, by the side of which sits the judge; the impulse and design of your heart is to be the first to reach that one point, which says, "Victory! the crown is yours." If you are pressing forward to win that prize for one you love it will be the very delight of your soul to hand it over to her and to say, "Beloved, this is my victory; it is all for thee." Have you ever felt such an impulse stirring your whole being until, with the head stretched out before the hand, and the hand before the foot, the feet obey the impulse, and every nerve is intent upon going forward? God permitted me in my youth to be champion swimmer, diver, high jumper, and long jumper, and I know well what it is to strive for the prize and to win it. But what becomes of earthly prizes—silver cups to be buried in a box? They are nothing to me now; but oh, the impulse to gain the point, and then to know that the prize is won!

Now in the spiritual life what is it to have the whole soul set toward the mark? We look eagerly for that moment when this earthly career shall be ended and the Judge shall say what our reward shall be. Oh, the impulse to gain the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus! Then Christ will distribute his crowns. Have you ever set your heart upon a crown? Utterly unworthy as I know myself to be I cannot be satisfied that I should gain less than all the crowns that my Lord offers to the participants in the heavenly race. What are these crowns? In the Revelation to St. John (ii. 10) we have the promise, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." That is for faithfulness in our own personal life (cf. James i. 12). St. Paul writes to Timothy (2 Tim. iv. 8) of "a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give, not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." That is a crown for fighting the good fight of faith, for finishing the course, and

for keeping the faith firm unto the end. There is also the "crown of rejoicing," which shall be given for winning the souls of the poor outcasts in their darkness (1 Thess. ii. 19). Finally, there is the "crown of glory, that fadeth not away," of which Peter speaks (1 Pet. v. 4). This is the crown which the chief Shepherd will give to the under-shepherds who have guarded the flock and have watched the sheep and cared for the lambs; a crown of glory, the best of all—a crown of life, a crown of righteousness, a crown of rejoicing, a crown of glory. What shall we do with the crowns when we have them? What will be the impulse of our souls, our greatest privilege? It will be to cast our crowns at His feet and to say, with the "four and twenty elders," "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. iv. 11). This is the impulse of every truly saved soul; this is the desire, the design, the purpose, the irresistible impulse of every man or woman who is wholly consecrated to God. What Christian can be content to obtain less than the best that the kingdom of God offers? Who can be so utterly careless, so unresponsive to the goodness of God, as to be content with simply getting into heaven? Consider the vast number of creatures that live in the ocean, from the wretched mussel, or the poor limpet that clings to the rock and never knows the privilege of motion, to the magnificent whale that presses through the water with a power that is almost unlimited, and tell me which you would rather be. Would you be content to cling to the rock all your life, like the limpet, or would you prefer to sport through the ocean with unbounded power? It is a great blessing to live in the ocean of God's love, it is grand to say we are alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord; but it is one thing simply to cling to the rock and to know no more, if we know anything, than that we exist; it is quite another thing to sport and be glad, and to

lift up one's whole being in the consciousness of power to move and progress rapidly through God's ocean of love.

We must each decide for ourselves what shall be our ambition henceforth and forevermore. We must have no degrading idea of merely sneaking into heaven through the blood of the Lamb; it must not be the mere cowardly, selfish thought, "Glory to God, I am out of hell!" Saved *from*, we are, blessed be God; but saved *by* is a more glorious dignity—saved by Jesus Christ. Contrast such a thought as that of being merely rescued from hell with the picture traced by the Apostle Paul. If any man in this world ever deserved to attain to glory before God by reason of his own righteousness St. Paul did. He could boast, I suppose, that he had done more to deserve eternal life than any one else of the whole human race. Who of us could say with St. Paul that, as touching the righteousness of the law, we are blameless; that we have been a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee of the Pharisees; set apart to God's holy business from the days of our infancy; kept by the power of God from a condemning conscience, and even more, perhaps, from a condemning law; kept by the goodness of God, and enabled to live a spotless life, so far as man could judge? And yet St. Paul was never satisfied, never restful, never joyous, never peaceful, until there came that wondrous day when the Lord struck him down and blinded his natural eyes that he might see spiritual things. As an old man once said to me, "God darkened the eyes of my body, sir, that he might open the eyes of my soul." God blinded the eyes of Saul of Tarsus that day on the road to Damascus, in the bright glare of the noontide sun, that he might open the eyes of his soul to see Jesus, whom he had been persecuting. He had been persecuting Jesus, as we have been persecuting the beloved Son of God by our godless efforts to attain self-righteousness, and by refusing to bow our heads in entire self-surrender to him. We must bow down

before him in order that we may be lifted up by him. That moment came in the career of Saul of Tarsus when, his spiritual eyes being opened by God the Holy Ghost, he saw the vanity, the emptiness, the hopelessness of man when left to his own self-righteous efforts; he saw, too, the perfection of God's gift in his beloved Son, Jesus, and he just opened his whole being to receive what God was pleased to give him. From that moment he says that his soul was set upon "one thing," one all-absorbing purpose of his life. He saw in an instant that whereas man was nothing, Christ was everything; that whereas righteousness by the law was vain and hopeless, righteousness as given in Christ Jesus was all-perfection, and might be received in a moment. He took that righteousness, and his soul became satisfied as never before. Then there arose within him a new impulse, a desire such as he had never known, to glorify God. Up to that moment his one thought had been to evade God. He had perhaps obeyed God as a slave under the law of compulsion; but now there came a desire, not to evade God, or to obey him from mere necessity; but one impulse took possession of the man's whole being—it was to win Christ in all his fullness. Of course he had won Christ, in one sense, the moment that the eyes of his soul were opened. As soon as a man believes, all Christ is his, but the man does not know the value of his new possession. So St. Paul soon came to see that there were unsearchable riches in Christ, and that he could never hope to exhaust these treasures or to satisfy his soul by any half-hearted course; therefore he set his face, he set his heart, his soul, his mind, his whole being, toward one thing—to gain a knowledge of Christ and to win Christ in all his beauty, while Christ came to dwell in him in all his power. St. Paul's ambition was this: "Christ, Christ, Christ for me in everything."

The holy ambition of a man like St. Paul should inspire us to emulate it, so that by the grace of God we may have a full

satisfaction such as he attained by giving up everything for the sake of knowing Christ in all the fullness of his power and love. My brother, would you know how to attain that? Would you know what a life wholly consecrated to God will mean, and what it will receive in the way of reward? Then study the picture of this man who had a holy ambition. It is a remarkable fact that in this little autobiographical sketch St. Paul has brought out concerning the true believer and the aspirant after the crowns certain features which make it all so plain that I do not think even the dullest could say, "I do not know what I must do or be in order to receive this fullness of blessing."

The Lord God, by the pen of St. Paul in this letter to the Philippians, has given us six uses of the expression "ALL THINGS," in contrast to one use of the expression "ONE THING." Taking these seven expressions together, we have the most perfect picture with which I am acquainted, of the life of holiness, the life of peace, the life of power, and the life of assurance of everlasting blessedness. These six "all things" help us to see what must take place in our experience if we wish to be like the Apostle Paul in our ambitions and attainments with regard to the crowns of glory and blessedness. But first of all bear in mind that no man enters upon this race until he has perfect certainty of his own salvation, and until he has attained certain preliminaries in the Christian life. Then, and then only, is one fitted to take part in this blessed struggle for the crown of glory.

In the first place, after St. Paul has said that we may win Christ, he continues (Phil. iii. 7, 8): "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." He says that he did count them but loss, and that he does count them but loss—and he has had some three and thirty years in which to reckon and decide

whether the compensation is sufficient to make up for the loss of things which he formerly counted gain. Like St. Paul, we must learn to count all things but loss in order that we may gain Christ. This is the starting-point in the heavenly career. I say this dogmatically because our blessed Lord and Master, from whom St. Paul was quoting, says (Luke xiv. 26) that unless a man gives up all that he has, he cannot become his disciple. Christ ran the heavenly race, and, "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." He ran with patience the race that was set before him. He, too, counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of God, and he says that no man can come after him in the race, no man can hope for the crowns which Jesus won—it must be first the cross and then the crown—until he has reckoned it worth while to count all things but loss. What are we to reckon loss? Not life merely, for St. Paul never once mentions life in this passage; nor does he mention earthly status, although these are both included. Paul was a man in high position; he had enjoyed great educational advantages; he was a member of the sanhedrim, and perhaps had been a man of wealth. But all these things he considers as of no consequence. He lays them aside without a thought. He counts as loss his reputation as a Jew, his ecclesiastical privileges, his church status—the very thing that hampers so many Christian ministers in entering upon the heavenly course. They are hampered not by money or by earthly pleasures nearly so much as, in the majority of cases, they are hindered by their ecclesiastical aspirations and dignities. They must follow the Apostle's example if they hope for the crowns of glory and honor. Examine yourselves and say before God if you are prepared to give up everything connected with your ecclesiastical dignity and your church status, your honors and high position or reputation among your fellow-men as one that is highly enlightened in religion. Are you ready to give up

everything for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus your Lord?

St. Paul goes on to say, in the second place, "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things." He speaks here, perhaps, of earthly influence. He looks at all the prospects of a man in his earthly position and says, "I count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him"—that is his desired position—"not having mine own righteousness: . . . that I may know him"—that is his longed-for privilege—"and the power of his resurrection"—that is the power; not the power that raised Christ, but the power that comes to us from his resurrection—"and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death"—that is the coveted friendship—"if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead"—that is the prospect. Then he goes on to say, "I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, I set aside everything in order that I may take hold of the ONE, only one, and I press toward the mark"—that is his purpose in life. Then he says what this is for: "for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"—that is the everlasting prize upon which his heart is set. Brethren, is the sacrifice worth while? Remember, before we decide to choose the "one thing," that we must have given up the others; all our ecclesiastical hopes and dignities, all our earthly comforts, all that makes this life appear so enchanting and enticing, must be counted as loss before we can press on toward the mark. We cannot run in a race when we are hampered by chains or are dragged back by cumbersome appurtenances. How can the man run who carries upon his head the honors of this world? He is top-heavy, poor fool! You cannot run well until you are free. Free yourselves now, by God's help, from the things that have hampered you hitherto, and, counting the cost, be it what it may, say before God, "I count all things but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him." Now

you are ready to enter the race; now you are free; now your limbs are oiled by the Holy Ghost, and the whole man prepared to run. It is an inspiring sight to see the racers toeing the mark, just ready to start from the tape-line. The signal is fired and they are off! There is one beautiful circumstance about the heavenly race which is never found in an earthly contest. In an earthly race a man must outrun his competitors in order to win the prize; his whole purpose is to reach the goal in front of them. In the heavenly race we secure a prize if, while we run with our eyes fixed on the Judge at the mark before us, we lend a helping hand to our neighbors to lift them up or to save them from falling. That is the way to win a first-class prize in the Christian contest.

But men are in some senses essentially selfish, and therefore the Lord, who knows our nature, knew that there must be a temporal motive for all this sacrifice, since from the time that sin came into the world an eternal motive has not been sufficient. I seldom wonder now that so many turn away from our Christian religion, when the only thing that we profess to offer them is something beyond the grave. If we cannot offer a man something of present value he is not likely to turn away from his earthly enjoyments, which present themselves directly before him. Therefore we are to compete with the worldly allurements in what we offer to young people of the advantages of the Christian life. If we stand before them and say that they must be prepared to drop every earthly attraction, every dignity and honor which hinders the soul, I do not wonder that they say at once, "I do not care for the kind of gospel that you offer; I want something *now*."

Now let us see whether or not the man of God has the best of the bargain when he secures what St. Paul secured by counting all things but loss. The next of my "all things" is found in the twenty-first verse of the third chapter. The Apostle, looking forward to the glorification of the body, says (Phil. iii.

21) that he counts himself wise in keeping his conversation in heaven, for if his citizenship is in heaven, his final reward will be that his "body of humiliation shall be changed into the body of his glory, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." That is the prospect for eternity. But there is in that prospect for eternity a beginning of present enjoyment. I suppose that no man who has yielded himself wholly to this world as the object of his ambition and hope ever declared himself to be absolutely satisfied. On the contrary, the man who follows St. Paul, and gives up all things for the sake of the one, finds with St. Paul that this is the starting-point to all true rest and blessedness. The only way, indeed, in which a man can hope to reach calm, quiet enjoyment is to be able to put all his possibilities and privileges, ecclesiastical, civil, and social, into the hands of One who is able to subdue all things unto himself. Men of passion, women of fashion, say where you will find any rest for your souls until you place them in the hands of Him who is able to subdue? Lust, temper, impulses, all that is naughty, all that is haughty, all that is bitter, all that is painful, is placed in the hands of One—Jesus our Lord—who, even before he takes this body of humiliation and translates it into the body of his glory, is able—and we find it true—to subdue all things unto himself.

Again St. Paul testifies to the blessings of this consecrated life, saying, "In everything and in all things have I learned the secret" (Phil. iv. 12, R. V.). Have *you* learned the secret, my brother? What is it? "Both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want"—the secret of perfect contentment. There sat the aged Apostle, bound by a chain to a brutal Roman soldier. Any day might be his last; that tyrant, Nero, might at any moment order his head to be cut off, or that he be thrown into the Tiber, or given to the lions. St. Paul had nothing but the comforts of a miserable Roman

prisoner. Apparently at times he had not even a friend to visit him, but now and then there came one who gave him some little gift, like that which Epaphroditus brought him. And yet with the galling chain that is fastened to his wrist, with the prospect of a martyr's death staring him in the face, and in despair of any human influence, this man takes up his pen and writes, "In everything and in all things have I learned the secret." Blessed initiation into the mysteries of the kingdom, to learn the secret of a Paul so as to be able to say, "No matter what my Lord may choose to lay upon me, though I be bound with cruel chains, and even with the danger of starvation or martyrdom staring me in the face, I can say with such a one as Paul the aged, now also the prisoner of Jesus Christ, that 'I have learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want.'" When a man gives up only one thing in his life he begins to be repaid a little, does he not, when in place of that little one thing he gains all things? That is the secret.

After you have learned the secret of absolute contentment in everything, you come to the next step (Phil. iv. 13): "I can do all things" (or, as the Greek means, "I am all-prevailing") "through Christ which strengtheneth me." Beautiful text! Here he has all power, the very thing that St. Paul asked for when he said that he gave up all things (Phil. iii. 10). A great Methodist preacher in Manchester, England, once stood up in his pulpit and announced this text—Phil. iv. 13. He began to read the words solemnly and in very measured tones: "'I can do all things'—Paul," he said, "you are a liar. 'I can do all things'—Paul, thou art a terrible liar. Oh, I beg your pardon, Paul, I see it now—'through Christ which strengtheneth me.' That is quite another thing; Paul, you are quite right, you are quite right—'I *can* do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.'" This is a secret worth learning, even if a man must be shut up in a prison, and must have

a galling chain on his wrist in order to learn it. I do not know that every one could say it, but the one thing is worth the all.

Now, lastly, the Apostle, this prisoner of the Lord, says (Phil. iv. 18), "I have all things, and abound." Wonderful Paul—all-contented, all-prevailing, all-abounding! A prisoner in chains with only one shirt on his back; bound to a brutal Roman soldier, and with none of the comforts of this life; having simply a crust of bread and a cup of water, and yet able to say, "I have all things, and abound."

Brethren, you have to count the cost and to make the decision. The option is yours, the prospect is before you, the privilege is open to you, the demand is upon you; you must settle it with God, and God alone will know whether your heart is right in its decision. Will you by the grace of God recognize henceforth that in taking Christ you take a sufficiency for everything? It is not to be by any human energy or purpose that you say, "I will enter the race and win those crowns." A man never won a crown at the hand of God by human effort; the crown is not to be won except in the strength of the work and sufferings of the Lord Jesus. The heart, the soul, the very being, must be yielded to Christ; the victory is won by the obliteration of self, that Christ may be all and in all. A man is light enough to run for the crown only because he has cast away everything that may hamper him. A man "in training" does everything to get rid of superfluities, and to "keep the body under." My brethren, we only need to get rid of the things which hinder; then the Lord Jesus Christ will take possession, and will enable us to win the crown. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfected"—even a Paul admits that; and when men talk about being perfected or having lost the root of sin, they are terribly deceived. We must simply take the perfect Christ and say, "One thing, one thing." No man excels who tries to excel in twenty things. We must be determined that in ONE THING

we will win the prize by the grace of God working through us. Give up ALL. Do not mourn over it, do not whine about it, do not weep before the world as if you thought that you were making such a sacrifice as to deserve peculiar praise or pity from those who are around you. That is what makes men turn away from the gospel. They see Christians sneaking toward the things of the world, as well as sneaking into heaven, and they know that professing Christians would too often very much like to enter into worldly pleasures. Let them see that, by the grace of God, you can say, "I can have all things; but I count them all but dung, simply for the sake of Christ, simply for the sake of Christ."

Now what is this ONE THING for which we give up all things, and through which we gain all things? I answer, Christ, Christ, Christ. Is he worth it? Go to a graveyard and do what I knew a little boy to do. He went out after hearing a solemn sermon, and began to measure his length on the graves. He very soon found that more than half of them were shorter than his own little body, and he came out of the graveyard saying, "Then it is quite clear that I am old enough to die." Yes, and it is quite clear that you are old enough to die *soon*. With the thought of death coming immediately, or Christ appearing suddenly—would that the day were at hand—you must calculate and decide whether or not you will say, "I have counted the cost, God knows that I have considered it well, and henceforth and forever I will have 'but one' purpose, one Lord; and then I shall have everlasting blessedness with my Lord and Saviour Christ throughout eternity." Close the compact by saying truly and fervently:

" Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come."

Say before God, "I do count all things but loss, I do indeed, I give them all up now, everything, everything, to be Christ's

and Christ's only, because he gave himself for me and to be mine forever. Mine forever, and I am thine forever. God help me." It will be a holy act, and not done lightly. Just seal the compact. You will not obtain a blessing because of anything you do, but what you do may help you to receive it. You must have only one thing before you—ONE—you cannot have two. Husband or wife, money-bag or home or child, must not come between you and Christ. No half-hearted consecration will do. If you are halting betwixt two opinions, think, think and pray, and then remember that if you once commit yourself to the Lord, he is able to subdue that—what? That awful sin. Able to subdue. Are you given to grumbling? You will learn the secret of contentment under all circumstances. Are you afraid that you will starve or suffer want? You will learn to say, "I have all, and abound."

I would dare to close with the beautiful words of the nineteenth verse, in which we read, as if in answer to all objections, "But my God"—I know him, I can trust him, says Paul, and I tell you that he is worth it; I speak out of a long experience—"my God shall"—no doubt about it—"shall supply all your needs." How far?—"according to his riches in glory"—not according to your needs, not according to your begging, not according to your cry; no—"according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

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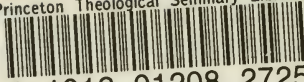
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